

THE BIBLE

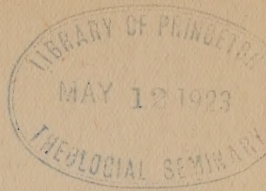
UNDER HIGHER CRITICISM.

E. H. DEWART, D.D.

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THE BIBLE

UNDER HIGHER CRITICISM

A REVIEW OF CURRENT EVOLUTION THEORIES
ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY THE

REV. E. H. DEWART, D.D.

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PREFACE.

I VENTURE to think that this book sufficiently manifests the purpose with which it has been written, to require no lengthy preface. My main object is to correct some current misapprehensions respecting critics and criticism, and to show, in plain and popular language, that most of the distinguishing theories of the advanced "Higher Critics" are not justified by adequate proof.

The chief conclusions of this critical school are stated, and reasons given for rejecting them; but many secondary points in this controversy have been left unnoticed. If the main positions of these critics are shown to be untenable, their views on subordinate points cannot possess any great importance.

Although a cumulative strength of argument and proof will be made evident by reading successively, in the order in which the topics are treated, yet, as each chapter deals with one phase of the general subject, any chapter may be read by itself without serious disadvantage.

It will be seen that the critical contest is not, as is often assumed, between "scholars" on the one side, and unlearned "traditionalists" who blindly cling to the beliefs of the past on the other; but between critics who have adopted the evolutionary theory of the origin of the Old Testament, and equally learned biblical scholars who

refuse to accept the negative theories of this "Higher Criticism;" but who advocate and practise the freest criticism of the Sacred Writings.

I have no disposition to cling to the opinions of the past, as if they were undoubted verities. At the same time, I am as little disposed to follow leaders who speak as if the great thinkers of the past were slaves to authority, and the conception of the Bible and its truths which inspired the godly faith and zeal of former times, was so erroneous that it must be thrown aside like a worn-out garment, to make way for speculative theories which have not been tested by time. The fact of a belief about the Bible being traditional does not prove it to be indubitably true; but certainly it should not discredit any belief, that it has been generally held by Christians in the past.

I have not written this volume with any thought of opposing the free criticism of the Bible; but with an humble hope that, in spite of my imperfect treatment of the subject, the facts and arguments submitted, and especially the judgments of eminent conservative scholars, may be the means of preventing unprejudiced readers from accepting unverified theories about the Old Testament, which tend to weaken and undermine faith in the truth and Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures.

E. H. D.

TORONTO, November, 1899.

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THE BIBLE UNDER HIGHER CRITICISM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON SOME CURRENT PHASES OF THE QUESTION.

A Time of Critical Enquiry—Questions that Require Definite Answers—Different Estimates of Critical Results—Vague Pleadings for Liberty of Thought—A Questionable Practice—Incorrect Assumptions Regarding the Position of Conservative Theologians—Fair Consideration Should be Given to Facts and Arguments.

IN these times of searching enquiry and mental unrest, nothing is too sacred to be criticised. The questioning critical spirit invades every department of human thought. We need not therefore be surprised that the Sacred Scriptures have been subjected to the same close critical scrutiny that has been exercised in other spheres of enquiry. But the peculiar claim of the Bible to be a book containing divine revelations of truth, invests the results of Biblical criticism with exceptional importance. In most Christian communities a notable interest is manifested in what is commonly called the “higher

criticism" of the Old Testament. Many who have not had the opportunity of examining the subject for themselves are anxious to know in what degree these modern critical theories affect the historic faith of the Christian Church, in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Many are asking such questions as these: What is the "higher criticism"? What changes in the historic Christian view of the Bible would the acceptance of these new theories involve? Are there any valid objections to the methods and conclusions of these critics? Would the general acceptance of the new theories about the Old Testament tend to promote spiritual religion? Is it true that all Hebrew scholars now accept the idea that the Old Testament is the product of evolution, rather than an authentic account of God's dealings with Israel, and a record of divine revelations made to chosen men, who "spake from God being moved by the Holy Ghost"? Are the arguments, for and against this evolution theory of the Scriptures, such as intelligent English scholars can understand, so as to judge for themselves as to what is true and right?

The significance of these questionings is very much intensified by the great differences of opinion, respecting the value of the results of the "higher criticism" of the books of the Old Testament, which distinguish the views of the advocates and opponents of the advanced theories. The former esteem the conclusions of this modern criticism a great gain to the Christian world, by which errors and misconceptions

of the past have been corrected, and the origin and character of the Hebrew Scriptures set in their true light.

But many eminent biblical scholars, though freely admitting the value of the light shed by modern study on the history and times of the books of the Bible, regard many of the conclusions of the advanced critics as speculative conjectures, not sustained by adequate proof, and strongly tending to undermine faith in the trustworthiness and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. It is important to know which of these judgments is right, or whether there is any safe middle ground between the extreme views of these conflicting schools of thought.

There are several things which make a plain statement of some of the main facts bearing on these questions neither untimely nor unnecessary at the present time. There is no scarcity of books and articles in reviews and magazines discussing this subject. The literature of biblical criticism is abundant enough; but the great majority of Christian people have neither the time nor opportunity to read these elaborate and technical works.

Besides, unverified conclusions are asserted with the most positive and oracular confidence, as if there was no room for any contrary opinion. Partial statements are made respecting the actual state of the controversy, that would "lead astray, if possible, even the elect." Sometimes opinions, that are still warmly disputed by competent scholars, are stated in a plausible paraphrase, as if they were unquestioned historic

facts; or, at any rate, as if those who do not accept that version of the matter might be counted out, as unworthy of any consideration. There are also signs of a tendency to show less reverence for the Bible than formerly. The words of inspired Apostles are sometimes set aside with an air of superior wisdom, when they do not accord with some modern critical opinion. This is a serious and suggestive fact.

In former times our forefathers heard or read of lax theories about the Bible being held in Germany, or France, or somewhere else, as something that did not greatly concern them. These things then seemed far off, and, above all, they had strong confidence that the personal experience of salvation in the heart would keep the head free from heresy and error in religious belief. But the wave of critical speculation has reached all the Protestant churches of Britain and America. It cannot be rolled back by any voice of authority. It must be squarely met by appropriate facts and arguments.

There are signs that of the younger ministers, who desire to keep abreast with the religious thought of the times, some have been smitten by the attraction of views that confidently claim to be the outcome of liberal thought and modern scholarship. Many of this class are without anything like a thorough knowledge of the issues at stake, or the strength of the objections which eminent biblical scholars, who do not accept the theory that the Scriptures are the product of evolution, have urged against the guess-work of the advanced critics.

Undoubtedly there are difficulties and apparent contradictions in these ancient writings; but these difficulties have been greatly exaggerated. In view of the remoteness of the time when they were written, the limited literature in the language, and the fact that Hebrew has long ceased to be a living language, it would be strange if this were not so. But we may admit the difficulty of reconciling two statements, without accepting a theory of different authors of different dates which is built upon it. Modern criticism has indeed suggested explanations which would lessen some of these difficulties. It is, however, the judgment of many biblical scholars that the views by which the "higher critics" claim to have solved many of these critical problems create greater difficulties than those they remove.

It is an admonitory fact that all past efforts to conform Christianity to systems of secular philosophy have resulted in robbing it of its spiritual power. Nor is it without significance, that German radical criticism of the Old Testament mainly originated in an effort to conform the conception of the Scriptures to the pantheistic philosophy of Hegel. It is truly said by Prof. F. R. Beattie, "that much of the modern criticism, which ignores the supernatural and seeks to give a naturalistic explanation of the religion of the sacred Scriptures, has grown out of the soil of the idealistic Pantheism of Hegel." The gravest problem suggested by this modern critical scheme is to determine whether the main theory of the evolutionary critics, and the conception of the Bible it

logically implies, can be accepted without seriously affecting those beliefs and religious experiences, that have been the vital forces of Christianity in every age of its history.

There is at the present time a good deal of pleading for free enquiry and progress in theological thought, which has special significance. It is deemed discreditable not to agree with the new theories about the Bible, and an evidence of superiority to accept them. Liberty of thought is sacred; but there is no necessary antagonism between freedom of thought and the acceptance of duly attested truths. The value of liberty depends upon the use we make of it. The right of freedom of thought is now so universally acknowledged that it stands in need of no defence. But freedom of thought does not mean that any one who advocates new theories must be exempt from criticism or refutation. Those who condemn all creeds have an unwritten, if not a written, creed of their own. It does not mean that adverse criticism of opinions we believe to be erroneous should be stigmatized as intolerance and persecution. It does not mean that the Church should not maintain purity of teaching in her ministry, without being charged with "heresy-hunting."

Whenever a preacher or teacher is criticised or censured as teaching views that are unscriptural and erroneous, a clamour is raised without much regard to the issues, that the man is not allowed liberty of thought and is being persecuted for thinking for himself. This is generally a false alarm. The issue is

not, shall such a man have liberty to believe what he deems right? No one wants to deprive him of that right. The real question is, If we are convinced that a man has accepted beliefs that are false and unscriptural, shall we authorize and employ him to propagate these misleading views as if we believed them to be true? Neither churches nor individuals should be recreant to their conviction as to what is true and right, nor indifferent towards what they believe to be erroneous. It is a spurious liberality that speaks as if one opinion was as right as another. This is virtually ignoring the distinction between truth and falsehood, and by implication denying that the Holy Scriptures are a standard of religious truth by which beliefs should be tested.

We may fully agree with the strongest things that can be said in favor of freedom of opinion, the sacredness of truth, and the right of new ideas to receive fair consideration, and yet feel it to be our duty to reject the particular views these liberal sentiments are used to cover and excuse. When some doubtful views are being publicly advocated and taught, general pleadings for liberty of belief in teaching have a significance they would not possess under other circumstances. At such a time pleas for liberty and liberality may be equivalent to an allegation, that all who reject the new views are opposed to free and independent criticism. This is confounding things which differ. Eloquent declamation about freedom of thought, love of truth, and the necessity of keeping abreast of the progressive learning of the

times, may be employed to justify and apologize for what is erroneous as well as in defence of what is sound and true.

When any teacher of men speaks as if theologians of the past did not grapple with the great problems of religious thought independently, and as if these questions were now in a state of flux requiring scientific adjustment, it is pretty certain that he is trying to make room for some ideas of his own. Hence, when we hear fervid pleadings for new ideas and the results of modern thought, and disparagement of all that we have received from the thinkers of the past, it is in order to ask those who adopt that style to come out of the clouds of indefinite generalities, and to tell us plainly what historic beliefs we are required to give up and what new beliefs we should substitute for them. It is not a commendable thing to cover doubtful dogmas with high-sounding generalities, that conceal rather than express what is meant. Those who have any new views to teach should have the honesty to state them plainly. When this is done, the supreme question to be met and answered is: "ARE THESE OPINIONS OR THEORIES TRUE AND PROVED BY ADEQUATE EVIDENCE?"

It has become a rather common practice, with some who have not fully committed themselves to the conclusions of the advanced critics, to portray as favorably as possible how much that is good and valuable in religion would be left us, even if the negative criticism be accepted. In other words, to make out how little harm it would do Christians to accept these new

critical views. This phase of the subject will be discussed in a future chapter; but I may say in this connection, that I regard this as a questionable practice. For, though we should be slow to pronounce dogmatically what the consequences of accepting a new theory shall be, yet, as the truth or falsehood of any teaching is the main thing, this should be settled before we determine our attitude towards any new views of the Bible. It is paying too much deference to speculative analytical critics to adopt, even as a working basis, the idea that we have nothing of the Bible left that is trustworthy, but what their partial criticism permits them to concede. There are many examples of men having begun by theorizing in this way, and ending by accepting the opinions for which their theorizing had prepared the way. This method has too much the appearance of preparing to surrender, by making the people familiar beforehand with the idea of adjusting themselves to the new theories. Picturing what the religious position of those who now possess peace through believing might be, after they have renounced the confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible which has inspired and sustained their faith in the past, is too much like describing to people who have eaten and are full how well they could do, if reduced to a starvation allowance of food.

A remarkable illustration of this practice is seen in a book by Prof. A. B. Bruce, which he entitled "Apologetics." At one point he says: "It will be time enough to dogmatise when criticism has arrived

at the stage of finality. It is far enough from having reached that stage yet. Not to mention endless diversity of views on special points, there are broad contrasts between different schools, even with reference to the leading critical problems.”¹

And yet his whole work is on the line of these unsettled theories. He is ready to surrender the historic conception of the Scriptures at almost every point. He constantly quotes the rationalist critics as his main authorities. His “Apologetics” is really an apology for the theories of the “higher critics.” It sometimes seems as if this method of building with confessedly “untempered mortar” was adopted because it is thought less likely to repel those whom it is desired to influence, than an outspoken approval of the evolution theory of the origin of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Some writers have a practice of ascribing questionable opinions to those who refuse to accept their theories; as if all who do not think just as they do were shut up to the acceptance of some weak untenable views, which require no refutation. One form of this is seen in the undue disparagement of the theologians and methods of the past. A recent writer describing the way in which former translators found an answer to the question, “What is the true text?” says: “Whenever the enquiry arose as to what any writer of sacred Scripture said in a particular place, the tendency of the theory was to insist that he *must have said* thus and so, and to fix in this

¹ “Apologetics,” p. 171.

way whatever form of the text seemed most favorable to the theory itself." One is prompted to ask, what translators of the past would accept this as a truthful characterisation of their work? The theory which denies all predictive reference to the historic Christ is, forsooth, called the "Ethical Theory"—as if those who deny the negative views do not fully hold and teach the moral and religious lessons of Hebrew prophecy. There is no just ground for any such assumption. It is contrary to the facts.

It is too much the fashion for those who advocate the evolutionary theory of the Bible to represent all who do not accept that view as timid traditionalists, who base their beliefs on the authority of theologians of the past, while the "higher critics" are to be respectfully regarded as having obtained *their* views by personal study and examination. The actual facts do not justify this assumption. As that able scholar, Prof. James Robertson, of Glasgow, says: "The critical theory is fast becoming traditional, and is accepted by multitudes on no better grounds than those on which the former view became traditional." Prof. W. J. Beecher says, referring to the analytic critics: "They have no right to claim that they differ from their opponents in that their views are based on investigation, while those of their opponents are based on tradition." Both the negative and conservative schools have in their ranks those whose beliefs about the Bible are based on personal study and examination; but both have also many who have accepted their beliefs because they had been the beliefs of others.

It is not too much to say, that ordinary Christians who hold the orthodox belief about the authorship of the books of the Bible have as good ground to be credited with independence, as persons of similar learning who accept the theories of the higher criticism, on the authority of certain critics. The latter class accept theories that are based on subtle distinctions and speculations, whose import they but imperfectly understand. The former hold the historic view simply because they accept the Bible as being what, on the face of it, it assumes to be.

We certainly should have some better reason for our belief than that it has been held by others, either in the past or in the present. But some writers seem to think it a sufficient reply to any objection urged against the radical theories, to say that it is on conservative or traditional lines of thought. As if it were enough to discredit any view that it was the faith of the Church through the ages of the past! If any theologians or churches in the past have held a theory of inspiration, or any other traditional belief which cannot be justified by a sober scientific study of the Bible itself, it should not be assumed that this questionable view is held by those who reject theories which divest the Bible of distinguishing qualities, which are in a large degree reasons for accepting its teaching as a standard of faith and duty. It is as futile as it is unjust to cite exploded notions of past times which no one now holds, such as that the Hebrew vowel points were inspired, that Moses wrote the account of his own death, or some fabulous Jewish

legends about the Hebrew Scriptures, as if such things represented the beliefs of those who reject the theories of the higher critics of Germany.

In the discussion of these questions which so closely touch our estimate of the Bible, I do not postulate any theory of the inspiration or inerrancy of the Scriptures, except what they claim or assume for themselves. I do not question any man's right to the most searching examination of the contents of the books of the Bible. But I claim an equal right to reject what I deem untrue. I feel bound to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints;" but I hold no brief for the defence of every traditional belief. I feel no obligation to accept what has been held by good and gifted men of the past, any further than it is supported by Scripture and sound reason. No opinion is accepted because it is old, or rejected because it is new. Neither novelty nor antiquity can be safely taken as a test of the truth of any teaching. "WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE"—these and these only should be accepted by lovers of truth.

I lay no claim to be a critical expert; but my whole life has been given to literary and biblical studies. I have considered with open mind the arguments of the advocates of the "higher criticism" and the counter criticism of their opponents. I ask no one to accept any conclusion on my authority; but I would remind those who may differ from me, that if pertinent and important facts are correctly stated, and conclusions supported by fair and valid argu-

ments, it is an evasion, and no proper reply, to try to break the force of such facts and arguments by the authority of "all scholars," or the alleged learning and love for the Bible of certain critics who hold different opinions. This method of answering objections has been too much in evidence of late. We are not dealing with the sincerity or conscientiousness of critics, but with the truth and soundness of their teaching and the validity of their arguments. The rejection and refutation of a man's opinions should not be construed as aspersing his character.

In view of all that has been written on the subject, there is not much room for new arguments. I have freely availed myself of what others have written. The numerous quotations from able and learned conservative scholars, which will be found in this volume, are the chief elements of value in the work. Yet, I would remind my readers that, though these judgments of learned men are weighty and valuable, they are not cited as unquestionable oracles, but for their force and reasonableness, and the help they give to a right understanding of the important questions under consideration. They disprove the common assumption that "all scholars" accept the negative theories.

One thing is certain, we are passing through a grave crisis. The Old Testament is "under fire." Essentially rationalist teaching about the books of the Bible is current in the theological literature of the day. It is advocated by men of distinguished learning, and received in unexpected quarters within the Christian churches. There is therefore great

need to discriminate between conjectures and facts—between plausible surmises and valid arguments. We should accept whatever is fairly proved by adequate evidence, and reject what is disproved or is open to valid objections. We should withhold acceptance from conjectural guesses that are not supported by proper proof, or that from the nature of the case can never be conclusively decided. Truth always suffers when men decide without the necessary data.

What is said in this volume to show that there are cogent objections to many of the methods and conclusions of leading “higher critics,” should not be construed as a condemnation of thorough and independent biblical criticism. I mean no indiscriminate condemnation of all higher critics. “There are critics and critics.” I simply mean to show that many current assumptions of leading critics, which strongly tend to overthrow faith in the trustworthiness and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, are not supported by adequate evidence and are advocated by unscientific and unwarrantable methods.

CHAPTER II.

STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE CAN JUDGE THE THEORIES OF THE "HIGHER CRITICS."

Undue Exaltation of Partial Experts—The Appeal is to Reason and Attested Facts—The Judgment of English Scholars not to be Discarded—Statements of Hebrew Scholars on this Point—The Cause of Different Interpretations of Isaiah liii.—Intelligent Conviction the Ground of Belief—No Disparagement of Biblical Learning.

IS it justifiable to assume, as is frequently done in current discussion, that this subject of the authenticity of the books of the Bible is beyond the comprehension of ordinary mortals, and that they must accept on trust what claims to be "results of modern criticism?" It seems as if some writers would have us believe that we have no choice between accepting theories that are essentially rationalistic, or admitting the force of infidel objections against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. We are not shut up to either of these alternatives. We cannot consent to strip the Bible of those characteristics which distinguish it from all other writings, in order to evade the force of skeptical objections to its divine authority. This question must be settled before we go any further; for if in-

telligent readers of the English Bible are incapable of understanding the questions at issue, it would be of no use to proceed with the discussion of the subject.

It is somewhat strange that those who pose as the champions of independent thought, and seem to think they have a mission to break the chains of authority imposed by the Church of the past, should be so constantly appealing to the authority of "all scholars" and "the consensus of modern critics" to settle vital questions affecting our estimate of the Holy Scriptures. The unquestioning acceptance of the theories of modern critics is no more laudable than submission to the canonized authorities of the past. There may be quite as much independence and love of truth in "earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" as in pliantly bowing down to the authority of critical experts, in order to be abreast with modern critical learning. It is well to keep in mind, whatever the learning or ability of any writer may be, that "THERE IS ONLY SO MUCH FORCE IN ANY MAN'S OPINIONS AS THERE IS FORCE IN THE REASONS FOR THEM."

No one should expect to settle such grave questions by dogmatic assertions, or appeals to the opinions of "scholars," however eminent they may be. It may be that, if we knew who were meant by the "Christian scholars" appealed to, we would know enough about them to regard them as unsafe leaders. Facts may be established by the testimony of competent witnesses, but the truth of opinions and inferences cannot be established by the prestige of distinguished

names. "Great men are not always wise." All the heresies that have corrupted the truth were introduced by men of learning. Baur and the leaders of the Tübingen heresy were as famous scholars and as popular for a time as the greatest of the "higher critics" of the present day.

The reader of the English Bible should not give up his right to think and judge for himself. Neither should the minister, who is not an expert Hebrew scholar, regard all these questions as exclusively belonging to expert linguists. Intelligent English readers are not left to the tender mercies of rationalist critics, with nothing but the resources of their own wits to meet the negative theories. The results of the studies of the most eminent scholars are within easy reach of all who desire to study them. So in all ages Christians have used successfully the weapons for the defence of the truth, that had been forged by the gifted leaders in the Church of God.

All who are at all familiar with what has been written by the most learned writers on this subject, both advanced and conservative, know that the main questions are submitted to the reason and common-sense of all intelligent Christian readers. If there are writers who think these to be matters which none but Oriental scholars can understand, why do they appeal to the general Christian public as they do? They cannot expect their theories to be accepted with unquestioning faith on their authority alone. Writers who make their appeal to intelligent English readers, if these readers consider the evidence for the new views

insufficient and reject them, should not condemn the jury as incompetent because the verdict is unfavorable to them. Yet, in Germany and also in America, it is too much the fashion to treat the objections of Christian pastors and intelligent laymen as of no account, and to regard all these questions as the special prerogative of college professors of the analytic school of critics. It looks as if readers of the English Bible may be conceded intelligence enough to accept these critical theories, but not enough to reject them intelligently; or, rather, that acceptance of the critical theories is made the test of intelligence, and their rejection an evidence of incompetence.

As the results of accepting the new conception of the Bible profoundly concerns the whole Christian Church, thoughtful men and women are not likely to give up their intelligent convictions in deference to claims of superior scholarship. They will require something more than the assertion of partial advocates, that certain theories are supported by "the ripest German scholarship," before they accept them as true. There is truth and common-sense in the remark of Dean Chadwick, of Ireland, that "plenty of orthodox clergymen, and laymen, too, who have not the slightest notion of rejecting anything that can be really proved, have just as little intention of letting go their old beliefs, unless the case is really made out to their satisfaction."¹ To treat with contempt intelligent English scholars who cannot accept the views of "higher critics," as if it was an imper-

¹ *Expositor*, November, 1889.

tinence for such persons to have any opinion on the matter, is virtually to deny their right to judge for themselves, and to assume that they should accept the new theories without an intelligent conviction of their truth.

It is now freely admitted by the greatest Hebrew scholars, that intelligent readers of the English Bible can understand and judge the characteristic conclusions of the "higher critics." The ultimate decision of the main questions in dispute must rest with the enlightened Christian consciousness of the people, rather than with partial critical theorists. A few quotations from distinguished Old Testament scholars, advanced as well as conservative, will show that the assumption that these questions are beyond the comprehension of English readers is not regarded as true or scientific by those who are the most competent to pronounce on this point.

Principal Cave, of Hackney College, in his able work on the Inspiration of the Old Testament, says: "It may be fearlessly asserted that the original words of the Old Testament are sufficiently known to us for the purpose in view, no future suggestion of textual criticism being capable of interfering to any material extent with the general conclusions which will be arrived at. . . . No one would have the temerity to maintain nowadays that valid opinions upon the general bearings of the Old Testament are impossible, either on the score of the corruptness of our copies, or on the score of the precariousness of our translation. In fact, we might almost rest satisfied with the Re-

vised English Version everywhere, without going far astray."²

The main arguments of the advanced critics are not based on special translations. Speaking of the alleged double authorship of Isaiah, Prof. T. K. Cheyne, one of the advanced higher critics, says: "My own opinion is, that the peculiar expressions of the latter prophecies are, on the whole, not such as to necessitate a different linguistic stage from the historical Isaiah; and that, consequently, the decision of the critical question will mainly depend on other than purely linguistic considerations."³

In his masterly work, "The Early Religion of Israel," Dr. James Robertson, Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Glasgow, says: "In the following chapters an attempt is made to approach the subject in such a manner that an intelligent reader of the English Bible may not be placed at a disadvantage, and to present the questions in dispute in such a shape that he will be able from the first to follow the argument."⁴

Even the late Professor Robertson Smith, speaking of the English edition of Wellhausen's "Prologomena of the History of Israel," says that the work "gives the English reader, for the first time, an opportunity to form his own judgment on questions which are within the scope of anyone who reads the English Bible carefully, and is able to think clearly and without prejudice about its contents."⁵

² Page 27.

³ "The Prophecies of Isaiah," p. 240.

⁴ Page 5. ⁵ Page 6.

A similar position is taken by the late Professor Kuenen himself, the great high priest of rationalist "higher criticism." He says: "The Bible is in every one's hand. The critic has no other Bible than the public. He does not profess to have any other documents inaccessible to the laity, nor does he profess to see anything in the Bible that the ordinary reader cannot see. It is true that here and there he improves the common translation; but this is the exception, not the rule. And yet he dares to form a conception of Israel's religious development totally different from that which, as anyone may see, is set forth in the Old Testament, and to sketch the primitive Christianity in lines which even the acutest reader cannot recognise in the New."⁶

That distinguished Hebrew scholar, the late Prof. A. McCaul, of King's College, London, speaking of the right understanding of the historic facts of the Old Testament, says: "In such matters no reader of the authorized version ought to allow himself to be mystified or silenced by an appeal to foreign critics, much less to be disturbed in his faith, as if he could not apprehend the general teaching of the Bible without profound knowledge of the Semitic dialects and the latest results of German criticism."⁷

Even so advanced a critic as Professor Ladd, of Yale College, does not regard these questions about the Bible as the exclusive province of Hebrew scholars. He says: "It is the *common* experience and *common*

⁶ *Modern Review*, July, 1880.

⁷ "Prophecy," page 98.

judgment of Christians to which the appeal must be taken. *And just as far as we separate the arguments for any view of the nature of the Bible from those considerations which commend themselves to the judgment of all alike, just so far do we remove the advantages of the practical use of the Bible from the reach of a large portion of mankind.*"^s

In such statements by such writers there is ample justification for submitting these questions for the consideration of English scholars.

Everyone will admit that the correct translation of the original, and the finer shades of meaning, can only be given by those who have mastered the language in which these Scriptures were written. But when the textual critics have done their work, and given a correct rendering of the original into English, the intelligent reader can judge as to the soundness of the conclusions that are based upon the meaning and established facts.

The questions at issue between conservative scholars and advanced critics only rarely relate to the meaning of the text; but in almost every case turn upon inferences drawn from a meaning and facts accepted by both parties. The different views of the Scriptures that are held and taught, do not result from differences in the scholarship of commentators; but from the spirit and beliefs with which they come to the study of the sacred writings.

The expositions of the 53rd of Isaiah furnish a good illustration in point. There is no material

^s "What is the Bible?" page 10.

difference about the meaning. There is general agreement as to what is said by the prophet about the mysterious sufferer. The late Dr. Edersheim, of Oxford, says: "There is no fundamental divergence between Jew and Christian as regards the translation of this chapter." As Dr. Pusey says: "The question is not what is the picture? On this all are agreed; but whose image or likeness does it bear?" The exegesis of the passage does not tell us who is the person here spoken of. We can only know this by finding who fulfilled what is said of the suffering servant. When the Eunuch's question is asked: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other"? the intelligent English scholar can judge as to what being in the world's history fulfilled these prophetic descriptions as well as the Hebrew linguist.

Rationalist critics, who come to the study of this wonderful prophecy predisposed to ignore or deny supernatural prediction and real fulfilment, and modern Jews, for a different reason, apply it to a personified Israel or one of the prophets. But Christian scholars, who believe that the Spirit "testified beforehand" to the prophets "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them," and who accept the testimony of Christ and His apostles to this great truth, are convinced that the Prophet is here speaking predictively of "Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth." Such eminent Hebrew scholars as Delitzsch, Orelli, Edersheim, Cave, Wunsch, Urwick, Oehler, Dr. A. McCaul, and others scarcely less famous, hold that the

prophecy speaks of a person, predicts the future Messiah, and was fulfilled by the events of the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament.

It is not the difference in their linguistic learning which makes these two classes of critics differ as to who is spoken of in this prophecy. It is their different beliefs respecting prophecy and fulfilment. The critic who asserts that an individual is not spoken of here, and that it does not refer to the Messiah, does not get this opinion by his superior learning, but by adopting beforehand a negative theory, which compels him to deny that the Prophet is foretelling "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them."

So far from it being true that arguments for and against the higher criticism can only be understood by linguists, they are more within the capacity of the intelligent English reader than the work of the textual critic. The translations of the latter he must take on trust; but the speculations of the former he can bring to the tribunal of his reason and common-sense. He cannot dispute about the meaning of a Hebrew text, or the soundness of a critical analysis, but he can judge whether the inferences drawn from specified facts are sound and reasonable or not. Arguments which cannot be stated in plain English and understood by intelligent readers, are too slight and fanciful to bear the weight of the theories, that we are asked to accept as results of so-called "scientific" criticism. The issues involved are too grave to be

decided on any authority, short of an intelligent personal conviction of the truth of the conclusions we accept. Here, as in every other case, we should "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." There can be no intelligent faith without convincing evidence of the truth of what is believed. As John Milton, in his famous "*Areopagitica*," forcibly says: "A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believes things only because his pastor says so or the assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy."

Every intelligent Protestant believes he can give good reasons why he is not a Roman Catholic. But the questions at issue between Protestants and Roman Catholics are quite as difficult and abstruse as the questions: Was the coming and suffering of Jesus Christ predicted by the Old Testament prophets? Does the New Testament contain an account of events that are declared to be a fulfilment of these prophetic predictions? Is the new critical theory of the origin of the Old Testament in accord with the conception of the sacred writers themselves? Can the New Testament conception of the Old Testament be rejected, without undermining faith in the inspiration and authority of the Christian Scriptures? These seem to us questions within the province of all thoughtful readers of the English Bible. Yet it is assumed by some that they can be answered only by Hebrew experts. Nay, more, that the Church must go to the experts to find out what her ministers may

preach and teach on these points. But Christians should no more accept a belief about the Bible on the authority of another's word, than they would accept a doctrine of the faith on such personal authority. It has been truly said: "The qualifications of the specialist render him peculiarly prone to push a theory at all hazards, when to common-sense it appears manifestly overweighted." (Robertson.)

In making these observations respecting the claims of critics and the rights of English readers, I have no thought of disparaging the value and importance of biblical learning. The Church and the world are profoundly indebted to Christian scholars for the translation, exposition, and defence of the Bible. The learned labors of these men have bequeathed to the world inestimable legacies of exposition that have greatly promoted an intelligent faith. Not the least of these is the able vindication of the authenticity and trustworthiness of the Scriptures, against the theories of the evolutionary critics. We should be willing to accept all duly attested facts. But when conjectural inferences and imaginary history are offered for belief, as if they were historic facts, on the authority of "higher" critics, every intelligent reader of the English Bible has a right to demand a satisfactory verification of the truth of what he is asked to accept as "results of scientific criticism." Without such verification no theory should be accepted.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT IS THE "HIGHER CRITICISM" OF THE BIBLE?

Need of Right Views of What is Meant—Definitions of Higher Criticism—Classification Depends on Conclusions Adopted—The Pentateuchal Controversy—Astruc and his Successors—Theories of Higher Critics—The Logical Results—Arguments Against Disintegration.

IT is necessary to have a clear and definite idea of the distinguishing features of the higher criticism of the Bible, in order to judge of the reasonableness of its conclusions, and to rightly estimate the value of the arguments by which its theories are supported or condemned. These critical studies are mainly confined to the examination of the internal evidence, which the books of the Old Testament present regarding their authorship, the dates of their composition, their trustworthiness, and the occasion and purpose of their being written.

Since the invention of the term "higher criticism" by J. G. Eichhorn, of Göttingen, it has been used by some writers to distinguish this kind of criticism from the study of the words of the text. Not that inferences, as to the times and authorship of the books, are any higher or more important than the settlement of the

correctness of the text, on which all theories and expositions must be founded. This is too essential a work to be regarded as a "lower" kind of criticism. As Principal Cave says: "The 'higher' criticism does not mean the 'superior criticism,' though many seem to think it does. The 'higher' critics do not mean the better critics, as if they were gifted with a sort of genius in criticism."

Of course, it is freely admitted that the power of sifting and weighing evidence, and of balancing probabilities, one against the other, must be possessed by those who would succeed in these critical studies. The absence of those qualifications is sure to cause failure, no matter what linguistic learning the critic may possess. A few definitions of higher criticism by distinguished biblical scholars may assist the reader in getting a right conception of its import.

Professor Zenos, of Chicago, defines higher criticism in general as "the discovery and verification of the facts of literary productions, on the basis of their internal characteristics and contents."

Prof. A. H. Sayce, of Oxford, says: "By the 'higher criticism' is meant a critical enquiry into the nature, origin, and dates of the documents with which we are dealing, as well as into the historical value and credibility of the statements which they contain."¹

Principal Cave says: "As regards its nature the higher criticism is nothing but an examination of the language and contents of the books of the

¹ "Higher Criticism and the Monuments," page 2.

Bible, with a view to determine when they were written, and by whom they were written, and how far what is written is valuable—more briefly to determine their age, authors and reliableness.”²

Prof. C. A. Briggs says: “Having secured the best text of the writings, criticism devotes itself to the higher task of considering them as to integrity, authenticity, literary form, and reliability. This is appropriately called higher criticism.”³

Prof. Francis Brown, well known as an American advanced critic, says: “Higher criticism deals with the human element in the Bible, and with that under certain aspects only. It has to do simply and only with the literary problems furnished in the Bible. It aims to learn the structure and authorship of the different books, to study the literary form of the Bible as distinguished from other biblical matters.”⁴

Dr. Brown’s definition seems to us too narrow. A true criticism should embrace the study of every feature of the Bible. If there is a divine element in the Bible it should not be ignored. Besides, a good deal depends on who is to determine what is human and what is divine? By Dr. Brown’s method the human element may be so unduly magnified and the divine so completely omitted, as practically to amount to eliminating the divine element from the Book. As a matter of fact, in the work of the leading “higher” critics there is generally no definite recognition of the divine and spiritual elements in the Bible, which are

² “Battle of the Standpoints,” p. 8.

³ “Biblical Study,” p. 96.

⁴ *Homiletic Review*, April, 1892.

its crowning distinction. The "literary problems" of a work really embrace every characteristic feature of it; and our study of the Bible should include the inspiration of its writers, if we believe there is proof of their inspiration.

Prof. Howard Osgood has shown, at length, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for October, 1892, that the majority of German scholars do not accept the division into "lower" and "higher" criticism. Each author generally makes a classification to suit himself. Schliermacher called it "a mechanical and untenable distinction." A. Sabatier says: "There are two sorts of criticism, of words and of facts, which have often been improperly divided into lower and higher criticism." But certain British and American critics use the term, as Dr. Osgood says, "as though it meant something scientifically definite, and were the highest possible reach of scientific exegesis." This is simply designating their speculations by a high-sounding name which, in many cases, the result does not justify.

Apart from the extreme play given in recent times to the use of conjecture, the higher criticism is not a new thing. The name is newer than the thing signified. It is virtually the same as what was formerly called the study of the genuineness and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures. We have a good example of this method in past times in Paley's "*Horæ Paulinæ*," which shows that the undesigned coincidences between St. Paul's Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles attest the authenticity of both. Also in Bentley's criticism of the Epistles of Phalaris this method was successfully used.

It is unjustifiable to talk as if some special method of biblical study had been discovered by German critics, which if only followed by Bible students would secure infallible results. There is no royal road to right conclusions. More depends upon the character of the man than upon any system of study. The philosophy and theological standpoint of the critic are generally more potent factors in determining his conclusions than any so-called "scientific" method of biblical study. Critics, like cooks, may use the same materials and professedly follow the same methods, and yet produce very different results.

It is easy enough to define higher criticism, as a method of biblical study, in general terms to which few would object. The difficulty is in designating and classifying the results of such studies. Equally learned, gifted, and sincere students of the Bible have drawn widely different inferences from the same Scripture records. The classification of these writers must be determined by what they teach concerning the Bible. Critics may be divided into conservative, advanced, and moderate, but there is no propriety or fitness in speaking of "lower" and "higher" biblical critics; because the so-called "lower" or textual criticism must, as we have seen, precede the so-called "higher" criticism. They are not conflicting methods. Both kinds of criticism are performed by the same critics. It is the views that any biblical student adopts regarding the authorship, character, and dates of the books of the Bible, which determine whether he should be classed as a "higher critic" in the technical sense or not.

It is unfortunate that the term "higher criticism" has become popular in this misleading sense; because, as shall be shown further on, it makes a wrong impression respecting the character and work of able Hebrew scholars, who accept whatever has been proved by sober criticism in modification of traditional opinions about the Sacred Writings, but who, after the most thorough and scholarly examination, reject the distinguishing assumptions of the popular school of "higher" critics. Though these conservative scholars are higher critics in the best and fullest sense, yet because of the special meaning the phrase has acquired, to avoid confusion, wherever in this volume the words "higher critics" or "critics" occur without qualification, the advanced or evolutionary critics are meant.

It may be as well at this point to give a brief statement respecting the Pentateuchal controversy, because of its intimate relation to the whole question of modern Biblical Criticism. It is fitly remarked by Dr. C. H. H. Wright that "the Pentateuch occupies in the Old Testament a position akin to that which the Four Gospels occupy in the New. The account of our Lord's life, presented in the Four Gospels, is the basis on which the system of faith and doctrine taught by the other writers of the New Testament is founded. Similarly the history and theology of the Pentateuch underlie the other books of the Old Testament."⁵

The Pentateuch cannot be discredited or degraded

⁵ "Introduction," page 70.

without affecting the authority and truth of the other books which imply its truth and authenticity. This is doubtless the reason why the assaults of the radical critics on these foundation records have been so persistent and relentless. The theories about other books of the Old Testament largely stand or fall with the theories about the Pentateuch, commonly called the "Five Books of Moses."

It would probably be safe to say that the controversy about the age, authorship, and origin of the Pentateuch equals, in its interest and extent, the discussion on any other subject in the whole range of modern or ancient literature. The subject, however, is too technical and intricate, and embraces too many minute and complex comparisons and conflicting hypotheses to admit of any adequate popular exposition in these pages. All that can be done here is to give a brief sketch of the main points at issue, that our readers may be able to form some idea of the standpoints of the parties in this controversy.

The main critical battle-ground is the Pentateuch, or the "Hexateuch," as it is now the fashion to say. But the inclusion of Joshua does not seriously affect the questions in dispute. If the Bible view is right, the book of Joshua must retain its historic character. If the critics are right, and the Pentateuch can be proved to be a late production, Joshua must be a still later work, written to follow it. In either case Joshua is a sequel to the Pentateuch, and follows Deuteronomy. If Joshua is a true history, coming down from the times succeeding the events which it

records, as there is good ground to believe, then the "higher criticism" of the Pentateuch largely falls to the ground. The references to the history and laws in the Pentateuch which are found in this book are so explicit as to leave no room for the late origin assigned to these laws by the evolutionary critics. Even if Joshua is supposed to follow the late date which the critics gratuitously give to Deuteronomy, yet, as Dr. Cave has shown, "this Book of Joshua, as a matter of fact, manifests an unmistakable familiarity with significant details of the Levitical legislation, supposed by the theorists to belong to the age of the Babylonian Exile."

The origin of the modern critical speculations, respecting the authorship and date of the Pentateuch, may be credited to a volume entitled, "Conjectures Concerning the Original Memoranda which it appears Moses used to compose the Book of Genesis," published anonymously at Brussels in 1753, by Jean Astruc, a French Roman Catholic physician. The main idea of this work was that the peculiar use of the names "Elohim" and "Jehovah" (or Yaveh) to denote the Divine Being, in the part treating of pre-Mosaic times, indicated two different writers, one of whom used "Jehovah" and the other "Elohim." These supposed writers have been ever since designated, respectively, the "Elohists" and "Jehovists," the alleged authors of two documents on which Genesis was assumed to be based. Astruc also thought he saw signs of other documents from which small fragments were taken.

Astruc's critical speculations were confined to Genesis and Exodus I., II., the early date and Mosaic authorship of which were not denied. The "conjectures" of Astruc, at a later time, were followed by an immense crop "after their kind." Of these critics Eichhorn, who was the author of the phrase "higher criticism," was one of the ablest. He, however, defended the antiquity of Genesis and regarded Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy as older than all the other books of the Old Testament. De Wette, Ewald, Hupfeld and other German writers supplemented Astruc's theory by new "conjectures" still more radical. These and later authors developed the theory into a complete denial of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. It was maintained, with great show of learning, that the existence of two component tales were proved by differences of style, repetitions, contradictions, and anachronisms; and that the signs of two original documents seen in Genesis extend to the other books of the Pentateuch and to Joshua.

For a time what has been known as the "Fragmentary" theory was popular. Instead of two original documents, it was assumed that the Pentateuch was made up from a great variety of scraps and fragments. The notion of a work of such coherent unity being composed from unconnected fragments, of the existence of which there was no proof, was too absurd to survive long.

The "Supplementary" theory was for some time supported by eminent scholars. Its main feature was

that instead of two original documents there was only one, that of the "Elohist;" and that the "Jehovist" was a later writer, who revised and supplemented the Elohist's document with new matter of his own. Some critics who accepted this view held that the Jehovist was the author of Deuteronomy, which they regarded as the latest of the whole. A weak point in this view was that the "Elohist" appears to have a knowledge of facts, which were supposed to be peculiar to the "Jehovist." The "Documentary" hypothesis assumed that the Hexateuch was compiled from different documents. The theory most dominant in recent times has been thus stated by an eminent scholar: Four principal original works were used by a redactor in making up the Pentateuch (to go no further); an Elohist, which supplies about one-half the matter; a Jehovistic and another Elohist, which have many likenesses and are closely united, and the work of the Deuteronomist. The second and third sources (J E) are held to be the older (about B.C. 1000-800); next, Deuteronomy (D B.C. 621), and last E (more usually named P, Priests' Code), which, by most, is dated at the time of the Exile (B.C. 441). To each of these three main divisions there is allotted a code; to J E, Ex. 21-28; to D, Deut. 12-26, and to P, the priestly and other laws of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

But among the advocates of this scheme there are many important differences of opinion, respecting the order and dates of composition of these documents whose supposed authors are generally denoted by the

letters E, J, ²E, JE, R, D and P. All the letters used to indicate the imaginary authors of supposed documents and fragments of documents make a bewildering display of algebraic-like symbols, which are taken as the names of writers of whom history knows nothing whatever. Yet they are given a "local habitation and a name" with the greatest assurance.

The theory of original documents or "sources," and that of three codes of laws in the Pentateuch, do not involve such revolutionary consequences as the inferences that have been based on them. There is nothing inconsistent with inspiration in Moses using earlier documents. It is also freely admitted that the laws which critics designate "the three codes" are in the Pentateuch, though not as separate and distinct codes. What is called the "Priests' Code" has to be gathered out of Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus, to form that code as constituted by the critics. The idea of these codes being the outgrowth of widely different periods is an essential part of the theory of these critics, to which everything must be conformed.

The laws of "the Book of the Covenant," the so-called "Priests' Code," and the "Deuteronomic Code" are indeed found in the Pentateuch, with their appropriate historic setting. But many distinguished scholars who admit this deny that there is evidence that these codes contradict each other, or that they were produced at three widely separated periods of time, or were, respectively, the codes of the period before King Josiah, of the period from Josiah to the Exile, and of the period after the Exile. They admit

the existence of these laws; but they reject the assumed late dates of their composition and the new idea of the religious history of Israel that has been based on this view. Prof. G. H. Schodde justly says: "The great evil of modern Pentateuchal criticism does not lie in the analysis into documents; but in the erection upon this analysis of a superstructure of pseudo-history and religion, that runs directly counter to the revealed and historic character of the Pentateuch."⁶ Many other Hebrew scholars hold a similar view.

Though the school of Graf, Wellhausen and Kuenen accept the documentary theory in the main, yet the order and time which these authors assign to different parts of the Old Testament, in the opinion of so competent a critic as Professor Herman Strack of Berlin, whom we have mainly followed in this sketch, "has introduced a wide chasm between critics of the Pentateuch." He says: "The significance of this new arrangement is at once visible in the revolution it necessitates in our view of Hebrew history." For example: The so-called "Elohistic document," which was once generally regarded by the chief "higher critics" as the oldest, is now declared to be the latest and least trustworthy of all. What ground is there to believe that the later supposition is any truer than the former one, which was once maintained with equal positiveness, but is now rejected?

The higher criticism of the Bible as described in general terms is a right and laudable thing. But,

⁶ "Pentateuchal Testimony," p. 160.

owing to the speculative way some critics carry out the work in practice, the actual results do not correspond with the theoretical ideal of the process. Hence, no correct idea of this radical criticism can be given by any definition, describing it simply as a mode or process of biblical study. Such a definition would embrace all earnest and intelligent study of the origin of the books of the Old Testament, without regard to results. The best answer to the question, "What is the higher criticism?" is a brief statement of the main distinguishing theories of these critics about the Old Testament.

The leaders of what is now the most popular school of "higher critics" generally regard the Old Testament simply as the religious literature of the people of Israel; or, in the words of another, "The sacred Scriptures are but the product of the various stages of religious attainment to which the people producing the Scriptures had reached. These Scriptures simply register the religious ideas of the ages in which they were produced, instead of being the product of divine interposition."⁷ They are assumed to be the outcome of an evolution, whose result is inconsistent with the unity of nearly every book in the Old Testament. The Pentateuch, as has been shown, is disintegrated into sections, which are ascribed to suppositional authors, in a way that denies the historicity of these books in whole or in part.

It is asserted, as we have seen, that the overlapping and contradictions show that not only Genesis, but

⁷ Prof. F. R. Beattie.

other books were compiled from different documents at widely different times, by unknown authors and redactors, or editors, who did their work so clumsily that modern critics, after the lapse of nearly three thousand years, when Hebrew has long ceased to be a living language, can confidently assign each fragment to its nameless author, or to the interpolation of a "redactor." Prof. W. W. Davies, of Delaware, Ohio, speaking of Professor Moore's treatment of the book of Job in the "Polychrome Bible," says: "The little patches, sometimes only a word or two, are arranged with as much skill as if Professor Moore had cut them out of an ancient manuscript and pasted them together. And yet, let us remember, that no such manuscript existed. But that our learned friend had to draw altogether upon his imagination." This is equally true of other writers of this critical school. Indeed, this work of guessing "sources," and assigning them to supposed writers, has become the chief business of these critics. The Psalms are all, or nearly all, assigned to the period after the Babylonian captivity. Formerly a great question in criticism was whether the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah were by some "Great Unknown?" as Ewald held; but recent critics represent that great prophecy to be a patchwork of fragments by various unknown authors. ex-President Bartlett, speaking of the "Polychrome Bible," says: "It may be doubted whether Professor Cheyne could find three scholars of high repute in England, America or Germany, to accept fully his dismemberment of Isaiah into more than one hundred

and sixty fragments, with scores of transpositions, numerous lacunæ and rejections, together with the assignment of some twenty dates, ranging through four hundred and sixty-five years."⁸ Other books are similarly disintegrated.

"The Book of the Law," which Hilkiah found in the temple, is said to have been Deuteronomy, which then contained only from the 12th to the 26th chapter, and had been written not long before by some unknown author, who ascribed it to Moses. Wellhausen does not admit that even the Decalogue is Mosaic. "The Book of the Covenant" (Exodus xx., 23; xxii.), he considers, was given to a settled agricultural people, and therefore does not date from the time of the Exodus. He overlooks the fact that these laws were given to a people who were shortly to enter upon an agricultural land of promise, and therefore were well adapted to the need of the Hebrews. The ritual and laws designated the "Priests' Code" are said to have been prepared after the Babylonian Exile by priests, and attributed to Moses. Portions of Genesis, which have always been held to be historical, are declared mythical or allegorical. The New Testament conception of prophecy and fulfilment is rejected. It is assumed that Jehovah was regarded by the Israelites, long after the exodus, merely as a tribal god, like the gods of the heathen peoples around Israel. The "Tabernacle of the Congregation," or "Tent of Meeting," is declared to be a late invention copied from Solomon's temple, that had no actual existence.

⁸ *Homiletic Review*, November, 1898.

The comparative fewness of the references to the ritual and laws of the Pentateuch in the prophets, is taken as proof that the people of Israel in the time of their greatest national prosperity knew nothing of the laws in Deuteronomy or the Levitical service, because they did not yet exist. It is even denied that the prophets of the 7th and 8th centuries B.C., knew the laws or ritual contained in the Pentateuch. We must no longer say "the law and the prophets," but "the prophets and the law." The assumption that the laws in the Pentateuch were written at the late times alleged by the critics, implies that the historic narratives, which give an account of the occasions on which they were promulgated, are a fictitious setting, evidently meant to make it appear that they were Mosaic, when, according to the critics, they were not.

The accounts of Creation and the Flood given in Genesis are said to be taken from Babylonian legends. The predictive element in prophecy is largely ignored by these critics, or assumed to be only fallible anticipations of what the prophets thought God would do, or the natural course of events bring about. These critics generally ignore or deny that there are prophetic predictions in the Old Testament which foretell the advent, life, and sufferings of Jesus Christ; or that these were fulfilled by the events of His life and death, as recorded in the New Testament. The books of Chronicles are said to have been written in the interests of the priests, by an author who wrought into alleged records of past times, as if they were facts, references to ritual ceremonies that were much later inventions. This supposed questionable method of

the chronicler is cited by Dr. Driver, as an example of the way in which other Old Testament books were composed. The book of Daniel is said to be the production of some pious Hebrew of the time of Antiochus, written to encourage his people under persecution.

Doubtless, some who are in sympathy with the views of the critics, and have even adopted their main hypothesis, may deny that they accept all these conclusions, but they are all advocated by leading critics, and it may be said that they largely stand or fall together. For the main assumption, that the Hebrew Scriptures were the product of a national literary development, which is implied even when not avowed, requires a general application to save the scheme. Let only one of the chief critical hypotheses, such as the late authorship and non-Mosaic character of Deuteronomy, be disproved, and the whole evolutionary scheme of the Old Testament will be seen to be in danger of a fatal collapse.

The consequence of assuming these theories of the higher critics, as we shall show fully in future chapters, is to discredit the Old Testament records, to make out that "the law was not 'given by Moses,' but produced by evolution," to deny that several of the books were written by the authors to whom they have been ascribed, to divest the Sacred Writings of characteristics that have invested them with authority for all Christians, and to lead to the conclusion that the actual religious state of the people of Israel was not what the historic books of the Old Testament represented it to have been. Hence, the advocates of these critical theories feel bound to imagine for the Hebrews

a different religious condition and history. Kuenen boldly avows, for the critical school which he represents, that their critical science brings them "*to form a conception of Israel's development totally different from that which, as any one may see, is set forth in the Old Testament.*" This is certainly a frank confession.

The general scheme of these critics is thus described by Prof. James Robertson, of the University of Glasgow: "What they maintain is, that the scheme of the biblical writers is an afterthought, which, by a process of manipulation of older documents and by a systematic representation of earlier events in the light of much later times, has been made to appear as if it were the original and genuine development; and they think they are able, by separating the early from the late constituents of the writings, and by a legitimate process of criticism, to prove from the biblical documents themselves that the history and the religious movement had quite a different course."⁹

Before passing from the general subject of the higher criticism of the Pentateuch, it may be well to very briefly indicate some of the lines of reply to the dissective critics that have been urged by more conservative biblical scholars. It is affirmed that the passages which have been cited as affording evidence against the unity of Genesis and other books of the Pentateuch, are subjected to strained and exaggerated constructions, without recognizing that they can otherwise be reasonably explained. It is also forcibly

⁹ "Early Religion of Israel," p. 30.

maintained that the use of the two names of the Divine Being and the difference of style may be fairly accounted for, by their being appropriate to the occasions on which they are used, and to the subjects in which they occur.

Notwithstanding the positiveness with which the critics dissect the books of the Old Testament, and assign unknown authors to books and parts of books at will, many thorough Hebrew and Oriental scholars maintain that the use of particular words, or a difference of style in places in the same book, does not justify the theory of different authors and redactors which has been so confidently built upon these things.

The distinguished Oriental scholar, Professor Sayce, of Oxford University, in an article in the *Contemporary Review*, says: "The critic is as cock-sure of his analysis as he is of the approximate age to which each writer or redactor should be assigned. A 'polychromatic edition of the Old Testament' is even being published in America, in which the 'eminent biblical scholars of Europe and America' exhaust all the colors of the rainbow in the effort to represent the literary Mosaic work of the ancient Hebrew books.

"Surely I am right in saying that such criticism is extravagant. Conceive of a similar 'analysis' being applied to any English book, say of the Elizabethan era. Even in the case of a modern English work, like a novel of Besant and Rice, where we know that there is a dual authorship, the attempt to separate and distinguish between the two authors would be futile and impossible. And yet English is a language which we

all speak and profess to know, and English literature is almost limitless in extent. The student of the Old Testament is in a very different position. The Hebrew literature that has come down to him is but a fragment of what once existed, and the interpretation of a good deal of it is doubtful. Our knowledge of the Hebrew language is in the highest degree imperfect; our Hebrew lexicons contain but a fraction of the words once possessed by it, and the meaning of many of the words which have been preserved, as well as of the idioms of the grammar, is merely a matter of conjecture. When we add to this that the critics are Europeans or Americans, whose training and modes of thought are utterly alien from those of the East, we may well come to the conclusion that the boasted 'analysis' of the Pentateuch is but an ingenious way of weaving ropes out of sand."

The late Prof. E. C. Bissell points out that while the modern critics teach that Genesis was mainly compiled long after the time of Moses from two conflicting documents of different dates, "the Babylonian tablets contain in the form of a continuous narrative, the more prominent facts of both the alleged Elohistie and Jehovistic sections of Genesis, and present them mainly in the same order, as one can plainly see."¹⁰ In the same way it has been shown that the poetic and plain statements respecting the coming on of the flood in Genesis vii. 11, 12, which the critics regard as a proof of different authors, have a counterpart in the story told to Izdubar. This Babylonian story, which

¹⁰ "Genesis in Colors," p. xiii.

combines what is deemed characteristic of both the Elohist and Jehovist documents, was in existence long before the time at which the disintegrating critics allege some Hebrew scribe combined the two documents in the account in Genesis.

Prof. W. H. Green, of Princeton, after fully and fairly stating the strongest arguments for the disintegration theory, and giving his reasons for rejecting it, says: "The existence of these documents and redactors is purely a matter of critical discovery. There is no evidence of their existence, and no pretence of any, apart from the critical tests which have determined the analysis. All traditional and all historical testimony, as to the origin of the Pentateuch, are against them."¹¹ Keil, according to Strack, "bases the Mosaic authorship upon the testimonies of the Pentateuch itself, the historical books of the Old Testament, the prophets and the New Testament, and finally that the Pentateuch shows no vestiges of post-Mosaic events and customs, no chronological errors, but exhibits a unity of spirit and language, and meets every expectation so great an antiquity would arouse."¹²

There is great force in these words of the late Bishop Hervey of England: "The whole life and career of the Hebrew race, from the earliest dawn of profane history down to the present year, is a standing witness that the narrative in the Pentateuch is not fiction."

¹¹ "Moses and His Critics," p. 104.

¹² "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia," p. 1791.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSERVATIVE BIBLICAL SCHOLARS AND FREE CRITICISM.

Free Criticism a Sacred Right—Orthodox Scholars Advocate this—Young Ministers Should Read Both Sides—Objections not Based On Prejudice—Critical Principles and Facts Accepted by Conservative Critics.

BEFORE proceeding to examine the distinguishing theories of the critical school, referred to in our last chapter, I deem it desirable to correct a widespread impression with regard to the position and work of those we have called conservative biblical scholars. There are misleading ideas respecting them “in the air” which need to be cleared away.

The right and duty of a sober free criticism of the Bible should be fearlessly maintained. Neither reverence for the Sacred Writings nor fear of consequences, should cause Christians to object to a thorough scrutiny into everything that can throw light upon the origin of the Holy Scriptures, their authors, the time when they were written, and their purpose and true meaning. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that a great deal depends upon the spirit and beliefs with which we come to the study of the Bible. No doubt freedom of thought,

like freedom of action, may be unwisely exercised ; but it must not on that account be renounced or denied. If there are Christian teachers who condemn all critical study of the books of the Bible, and cling to everything that has been held in the past, we do not speak for this class.

I desire to give no uncertain sound regarding this right ; because it is often incorrectly alleged or assumed, as I have already intimated, that all who repudiate or question the views of the advanced critics are opposed to freedom of thought and enquiry on biblical questions. From some things said and written one might suppose that, on one side stood the "higher critics," battling for thorough and independent study of the contents of the Old Testament ; and, on the other side stood only unlearned "traditionalists," resisting independent criticism and protesting against everything that does not agree with the old beliefs of the Church ; and for this reason condemning and rejecting every new idea. This is not a true representation of the case.

Yet Canon Driver says : "Nor can it be doubted that the same conclusions upon any neutral field of investigation would have been accepted by all conversant with the subject ; they are only opposed in the present instance by some theologians, because they are supposed to conflict with the requirements of the Christian faith."¹ This is a partial and unjustifiable assertion. It is unwarrantable to charge able biblical scholars who have rejected certain speculative

¹" Introduction," p. x.

theories, because on thorough examination they found that they were not supported by the evidence of facts, with having no reason for their conclusions but that these new ideas were "supposed to conflict with the requirements of the Christian faith." The many gifted and learned theologians who have rejected the theories of Wellhausen and his British and American disciples, and laid bare the partial criticisms of Dr. Driver himself, have not justified themselves by appealing to the beliefs and interpretations of the church in past times, nor by denying the right of free higher criticism.

Suppose we should allege that all those who declare themselves in favor of the theories of these critics do so just because they are something new, whose adoption gives one a reputation for being progressive and independent, would this be deemed fair by the advocates of the new criticism? Not likely. Yet this would be just as fair as to allege that those who do not accept the new theories about the evolution of the Old Testament, do so simply because it is not the traditional view.

It is inexcusable for anyone, who is acquainted with the current literature of the subject, to assert or assume that all the biblical learning represented by higher criticism, in its best and widest sense, is possessed by the development critics. It is not scholarship against ignorant prejudice, as some allege, but critic against critic. Such eminent biblical scholars as Lightfoot, Westcott, Green, Rawlinson, Bissell, Cave, Robertson, Orelli, Perowne, Osgood,

Chambers, Schodde, Bartlett, Wright, Ellicott, Hommel, Meade, Leathes, Douglas, Behrends, Hengstenberg, Beecher, Sayce, Edersheim, Davison and Harman, have used the best methods and resources of modern biblical learning, just as truly and as independently as Kuenen, Wellhausen, Robertson Smith, Cornill, Cheyne, Briggs, Bennett, Toy, Brown and Driver. No doubt, the greater notoriety of the latter class is largely the result of their wider departure from the historic belief respecting the Bible. We do not mean by the historic belief any special theory of inspiration, but simply faith in the truth, trustworthiness and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Conservative scholars, just as strongly as advanced critics, have advocated free biblical criticism. A few examples of this may not be superfluous, in view of the popular misconceptions regarding the position and attitude of the theologians who reject the evolutionary theory of the Bible.

Prof. W. H. Green, of Princeton, who was chairman of the American Committee on the revision of the Old Testament, and is generally admitted to be the most eminent Hebrew scholar in America, and the most effective critic of the rationalist criticism of the Pentateuch, says: "We most assuredly have no disposition to decry the science of biblical criticism. Its province is to investigate the origin and structure of the books of the Bible, to ascertain when and by whom and under what circumstances and for what purpose they were written, and to determine the nature of their contents. These are not only proper

subjects of enquiry, but they are very important to a correct understanding and a right appreciation of the Bible as a whole, and of its several parts. And we do not object to the 'higher criticism' of the Pentateuch. It is not only entirely legitimate, but extremely serviceable, if properly applied. We welcome the most thorough and searching enquiry into the authorship and the historical character of the Pentateuch. Such an enquiry, fairly conducted, can only result in establishing the truth of the record and the reality of its claims."² Dr. Green has shown his faith by his works, in his learned and acute writings on the Pentateuch, in which he ably replies to the disintegrating critics.

Prof. Howard Osgood, who has ably criticized the rationalist theories, and who was also a member of the Old Testament Committee, says: "To oppose criticism as an operation of the mind is bald stultification, for the very opposition is criticism. . . . Liberty is the first requisite for truth, discovery, progress, as well as for the right preservation of what has been previously gained. The truth has nothing to fear from liberty."³ Dr. Osgood's articles in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* and other periodicals are among the most effective criticisms of the hypotheses of the "higher" critics.

Dr. C. H. H. Wright, author of an "Introduction to the Old Testament," is regarded as a conservative scholar by advanced critics, yet, he says: "A bold

² *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, July, 1894.

³ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October, 1892.

and fearless attitude, however, on all such questions, on the part of the biblical student, is more likely to convince gainsayers and to inspire confidence than a timid appeal to authority by the endeavor to put an undue strain on New Testament statements. . . . No theories of inspiration can be permitted to stifle investigation.”⁴

Principal Cave, of Hackney College, London, is well known as one of the ablest of the English conservative biblical scholars. His work on “*The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered*,” is one of the very best works on Inspiration. He says: “The critical method is the prosecution of knowledge by, first, classifying facts, and next, reasoning from the facts when classified. The man who refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of such a method in the study of the Bible is no friend to the Bible, and is, whether he knows it or not, either a tyro or a traitor. For who will long believe where he may not think? and who will long think in fetters? Freedom, freedom to follow where thought leads, is of the essence of thought; and thought, thought regulated by its own laws, is of the essence of belief. Now, the so-called higher criticism of the Bible in its idea is simply rational examination of the facts of the Bible—its facts of literature and its facts of history, its style and its contents, by the aid of comparison and inference.”⁵

These and many other evangelical Hebrew scholars

⁴ “Introduction,” p. 83.

⁵ “Battle of the Standpoints,” p. 11.

have illustrated the spirit of their pleas for freedom, in their writings on this subject. In such works as Robertson's "Early Religion of Israel;" Green's "Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch;" "Lex Mosaica;" Cave's "Inspiration of the Old Testament;" Edersheim's "Warburton Lectures;" Bissell's "The Pentateuch, its Origin and Structure;" Ellicott's "Christus Comprobator;" "The Veracity of the Pentateuch," by ex-President Bartlett; Beattie's "Radical Criticism;" "Moses and his Recent Critics;" Delitzsch's "Messianic Prophecies;" Orelli's "Old Testament Prophecy;" Sir J. W. Dawson's "Modern Science in Bible Lands;" Green's "Moses and the Prophets;" the last edition of Harman's "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures;" and in numerous articles in reviews, the theories and arguments of the disintegrating critics have been ably reviewed, and most of their main conclusions shown to be fanciful and untenable guesswork. It is not, therefore, dogmatic "traditionalists" who condemn all higher criticism, that have to be met and answered by the "higher critics."

It should not therefore be forgotten or ignored that THERE ARE ORTHODOX HIGHER CRITICS, and that the results of modern biblical criticism embrace more than the theories of the evolutionary critical school. Yet many otherwise intelligent Christians, and even some ministers, speak as if they were not aware of the fact, that able and learned biblical scholars have thoroughly gone over the same ground, dealt with the same facts, and examined the same critical problems, as the advanced critics of Germany, Britain and

America. These eminent conservative scholars have not tested the new views by the traditional beliefs of the past. They have accepted whatever has been fairly proved, and rejected what they deemed built upon conjecture, or considered the result of preconceived critical dogmas; in every case giving pertinent facts and arguments to justify their critical conclusions. The significance of this fact, in its bearing upon the main questions at issue, has not been duly recognised.

Some young ministers make the mistake of accepting as critical oracles such writers as Driver, Harper, Bruce, Briggs, Farrar and Horton, while they neglect to examine the writings of not less able and independent biblicists, who have pointed out the doubtful methods and untenable theories of Wellhausen and his followers. I do not say to any young minister: "Professor Green, or Professor Robertson, or Professor Rawlinson is an eminent Hebrew scholar, therefore you should accept his views." But I would say to every Bible student, that these writers I have named have written ably and convincingly against the extreme theorists; and no confidence of young ministers, in their own ability to judge the work of the higher critics, should prevent them from giving fair and full consideration to what has been written on the other side of the question. Theological students who go to Germany to study, and while there hear only the ingenious and plausible views of advanced critics, do not deal fairly with themselves or the opponents of rationalist theories of the Bible.

A sentiment of personal sympathy with one who has broken away from conservative views may be natural and generous; but some stronger reason than this should determine our belief about the Holy Scriptures. In view of the great interests at stake, all young ministers should give earnest personal consideration to the arguments against the critical speculations of the advocates of the development theory. Such consideration will at least convince them how unjustifiable it is, for men to talk as if nothing but ignorance and prejudice prevents any one from accepting the disintegrating hypothesis of the Scriptures, with all its negations.

We have no disposition to disparage the learning or deny the sincerity of higher critics, whose conclusions we deem "not proven." But the confident assertions of advocates of the new criticism, as to its acceptance by "all scholars," have, to a considerable extent, prevented the Christian public from realizing the fact, that the learned Hebrew scholars do not by any means all accept the scheme of critics who regard the Bible as the product of national development. When any one speaks of the conclusions of modern critics, he should indicate what critics and what conclusions he means. It is unjustifiable and misleading for any writer or public teacher to speak, as is sometimes done, as if there was some definite product of thought known and recognized as "the result of modern biblical criticism."

The able and independent Oriental scholars who reject many of the conclusions of German and English

critics, have not done this merely because the new views are "supposed" to conflict with the Christian faith of the past ; but because they are convinced that the analytic critics have not made good their critical conjectures. Are not the conclusions of such biblical scholars as Green, Robertson of Glasgow, Edersheim, Cave, Bissell, Sayce, and Hommel, as much entitled to be regarded as "results of modern critical scholarship," as those of men who have come to the study of the Bible with a theory of evolution to which everything must bend ?

Dr. Driver knows very well that in every case the conservative biblical scholars have given reasons for their conclusions, which, whether satisfactory to him or not, prove that they have something to say to justify their position, besides what he alleges. The practice of ignoring the facts and arguments of conservative scholars, and counting none worthy of the name of "scholars" but those who agree with them, may be convenient tactics for partisan controversialists, but certainly cannot be commended for its fairness. It naturally called out comments when the late Prof. Robertson Smith re-issued his "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," without taking any notice of the critical objections of such able scholars as Professor Green of Princeton, and Professor Watts of Belfast.

It is well known that a preacher or writer, who assails what is held as orthodox in a community, is sure to attract more attention than he would otherwise have secured. A reputation for heterodoxy never

fails to enhance a man's reputation for scholarship and ability, and to give him an undue importance beyond what his talents would otherwise have commanded. But a man may be quite a linguist and have a natural penchant for new ideas, and yet be wanting in that impartiality and soundness of judgment, which are essential to make him a safe leader in theology and biblical criticism. Learning does not preclude partial judgment, or make men infallible oracles.

In these days the author or the preacher who advocates any new ideas in theology, whether true or false, generally seems to think that he should be regarded as a Galileo, a Luther, or an Arminius, animated solely by an exceptional love of truth; but that all who venture to question his infallibility, and defend "those things which are most surely believed among us," are to be treated as people to whom exploded creeds are dearer than truth. It is true that things denounced as heresy at one time have been accepted as truth at another. But the history of human thought does not justify anyone in assuming that opposition to the general belief, or the advocacy of new theories, is a sure sign of being right. Many advocates of new things, that were to supersede the old order, have turned out to be false prophets, who misled those who were weak enough to follow them.

The rejection of some critical conjectures, evidently made in the interest of a rationalist scheme, should not lay any one open to be stigmatized as an opponent of free criticism, or modern learning. Yet one can hardly utter an objection, or a refutation of what he

is convinced is unscriptural and dangerous teaching about the Bible, without being characterised as one who "treats conscientious and devout investigation as if it were wrong and heretical," if not as an intolerant persecutor of those who, it is complacently assumed, love truth better than traditional beliefs. Is the liberty of thought to be all on one side? Is the rationalist critic to be free to assail principles and beliefs which are held to be sacred truths, and are men to be stigmatized as opponents of independent biblical study, because they claim the right to defend what they believe to be true, and condemn what they believe to be erroneous? That seems to be the idea of freedom of thought which some advocates of the negative theories of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfilment have adopted.

But assuredly men are not bound to accept or condone views of the Bible which they are convinced are crude and contrary to the weight of proof, in order to show that they are not opposed to thorough and independent criticism. In conceding to all men the right of independent thought, we do not assume any obligation to accept their conclusions, whether we deem them true or not. When, I decline to accept the beliefs of Unitarians and Roman Catholics, I do not deny their right to study the Scriptures for themselves, and to hold the opinions that they deem true; nor do I in any way interfere with their freedom of thought.

It may be asked, what results of modern biblical criticism are accepted by those who may be regarded as sober and independent biblical scholars? Neither

the space available, my want of a right to speak for them, nor the main purpose and scope of this work, will permit an attempt to discuss so large a subject. Besides, these authors have not adopted any stereotyped creed on these subjects. Yet a few observations may serve as a partial indication of an answer to this question.

Professor Zenos, of Chicago, in a recent article in the *Homiletic Review*, on the "Accredited Principles of the Higher Criticism," points out with much force and clearness that certain principles of criticism are generally accredited as proper; but that they may be applied in a way that renders the conclusions based upon them unworthy of confidence. For example, it is admitted that the literary features of a work may indicate its authorship. As a general principle this cannot be denied. But there may be differences of style, owing to the difference of subject, or to different parts of a book being written at different periods of an author's life, which would not justify the assumption of different authors. It is also accepted as a sound historic principle, "that a writing fits into the historic setting in which it arose." But, as Professor Zenos shows, the correspondence between a writing and a particular period may be too general to settle the question of its date. He who builds an inference respecting the time of a work on this principle "must show that the marks left by the historical surrounding on the writing are those which only the setting he claims for it could have left on it." Another principle, which it is admitted conservative higher

critics accept as sound, is that the theological or religious thought of a writer may serve as a means of identifying him and his time. But in using this principle an unverified theory of evolution may be adopted, and the sacred writings be judged by their conformity to a supposed religious condition, that had no historic existence at the time to which they have been assigned by the critics. This has actually been done in many cases by modern critics.

Professor Zenos pertinently remarks: "The validity of the results will depend on whether the principles corroborate and support one another in leading to the results; that is, whether they converge. . . . If the literary, historical, and theological principles can be shown to unite in support of a conclusion, then its value will be so great that if tradition contradicts it, it may be fairly assumed that tradition is in error."⁶

Most conservative scholars hold no mechanical theory of inspiration, such as is sometimes ascribed to them. They admit that Genesis and some other parts of the Old Testament are based upon older documents; but they do not admit that this hypothesis implies any great difference in the age of these documents. They admit that some places in the Pentateuch present signs of unimportant additions by copyists later than the time of Moses, such as the statement that certain Kings reigned in Edom "before there reigned any King over the children of Israel." But, as Dean Chadwick says, "The fact that the Prayer Book contains prayers for Queen Victoria

⁶ *Homiletic Review*, October, 1898.

does not prove that it is not the product of a much earlier time."

They do not assert that Moses wrote the five books of the Pentateuch with his own hand; but that the laws and history were at least recorded under his direction and by his authority. That some changes of form may have been made in transcribing the laws at later times is conceded by some of these biblical scholars. Some parts of the Pentateuch are plainly said to have been written by Moses. The issue now is not whether Moses wrote the whole Pentateuch, but whether its records of what took place are true history, clothed with Mosaic authority, or a fictitious setting for late codes by unknown authors. The main question is: *Did Moses do and say what these books ascribe to him?* The "higher" critics deny that he did.

Those whom we call conservative critics generally admit that Ecclesiastes and Chronicles were written later than was formerly supposed; but not that the ritual and laws called the "Priests' Code" were late productions falsely ascribed to Moses. They do not admit that Deuteronomy was written in the time of Manasseh or Josiah by an unknown author. They hold that the neglect of the laws of Moses at certain times does not prove them to have been unknown or non-existent. In these remarks we make no pretence of giving a full statement of what is accepted by "conservative higher critics." Some authors, whose learning and piety cannot be questioned, accept the "Deutero-Isaiah" and other critical

theories, which may safely be left to await the ultimate judgment of the future.

It would be presumption for me to attempt to assign biblical writers to the critical schools to which they belong. There is a class of authors who repudiate the extreme views of radical critics, and yet accept and build upon their main assumptions, whom it is very hard to classify. It is difficult to draw a clearly-defined dividing line. The acceptance of late dates and anonymous sources for the contents of the books of the Old Testament, to adjust them to the development theory, is a pretty sure sign of an author's position. The answers that will be given to such questions as: Do you accept Deuteronomy as being what, on the face of it, it assumes to be? Do you accept the New Testament conception of Old Testament prophecy and fulfilment? will show with tolerable certainty the school to which a critic belongs.

The main distinction between the conservative and the advanced critics is, that those whom we designate "conservative higher critics" accept the Pentateuch and other books of the Old Testament as being what they assume to be, records of actual events and divine revelations of truth, and not late fabrications, artfully written, so as to make the impression that they had an antiquity and authority to which, according to the "higher" critics, they have no claim.

CHAPTER V.

THEORIES BUILT ON IMAGINARY STATES OF LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

Making History Fit a Scheme—An Unjustifiable Way of Fixing Dates—Archæology Contradicts the Higher Critics—Accounts in Genesis not Babylonian—Import of Recent Discoveries not Recognized.

THE way in which the dates of the books of the Bible are fixed, by their agreement or disagreement with the supposed condition of the people at certain times, seems to indicate that it is an underlying axiom of this critical school, that the state of literary and religious knowledge at any past period must be made to harmonize with the requirements of the evolutionary theory of these critics. Acting on this latent maxim, they assign late dates to certain parts of the Old Testament, on the ground that in style or ideas they are too far in advance of the literary or religious condition of the times to which they have been ascribed. This is persistently done, though the critics have not, and cannot claim to have, any special means of knowing what was the religious or literary condition of the people of those remote times.

It is pertinently observed by Canon George Rawlinson: "Unless we accept the historical books as delivering to us, in the main, a faithful and trustworthy account of the people and of the vicissitudes through which they passed, we must confess ourselves to be absolutely without any knowledge at all of the national history, for nearly a thousand years after the Exodus. To construct for ourselves a different history from this, out of our own theories of what is likely to have taken place, or by the use of an eclectic process which consists in accepting as much as we like and rejecting as much as we do not like of the extant narrative, is to substitute fancy for fact, idealism for reality, a mere imaginary picture of past times for an authenticated account of them."¹

This way of determining the dates of books and sections of books, by a comparison of their ideas with an assumed state of religious knowledge, appears to be adopted with an idea that if long periods of time be allowed for development, this will make it less necessary to admit supernatural revelations of religious truth. This is more extensively implied than openly expressed; though it is sometimes expressed plainly enough. A few examples may be given to illustrate the common practice of these theorizing critics.

Canon Driver says: "The prophetic teaching of Deuteronomy, the point of view from which the laws are presented, the principles by which conduct is estimated, presuppose a relatively advanced stage of

¹"*Lex Mosaica*," p. 30.

theological reflexion, as they also approximate to what is found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel."² Just as if unity of teaching was not to be expected in the books of the Bible. Has it not inspired Christian faith in the divine inspiration of the sacred writings, that there was a golden thread of ethical unity running through the different books of the Holy Scriptures, which was a powerful evidence that these holy men "spake from God being moved by the Holy Ghost"? Must this belief be discarded in future?

Allan Menzies, speaking of Moses, says: "Even if he were to some extent a man of letters (and it is doubtful if he could be so), any written words of his which survive must be extremely short."³ Speaking of the pre-Mosaic Age, Schultz says: "It was a time prior to all knowledge of writing."⁴

The Rev. Buchanan Blake, speaking of the religious teaching of Jonah, says: "While again the distinct purpose of the writer to teach that Nineveh might be forgiven on true repentance, is a purpose that speaks of a time when the lessons of Isaiah and Jeremiah had been well learned. Only after the Exile were such principles as this book contains inculcated."⁵ Unity of Scripture teaching is evidently repudiated.

Wellhausen says: "The question why it was that Elijah and Elisha committed nothing to writing while Amos, a hundred years later, is an author, hardly

²"Introduction," p. 83.

³"National Religion," p. 15.

⁴"Old Testament Theology," p. 25.

⁵"How to Read the Prophets," Jonah, p. 13.

admits of any other answer than that in the interval a non-literary had developed into a literary age."⁶

Principal Wace says: "In the introduction to Dr. Kautsch's recent and useful German translation of the Old Testament, it is expressly stated that there was not, and could not be, much writing in the early days of Jewish history; but that Jewish literature began, like that of other nations, with popular songs and ballads, such as those which are found in the early books of the Old Testament." Dr. Wace pertinently adds: "Such a supposition would seem, indeed, indispensable to the theory."⁷

Canon Driver, speaking of the 90th Psalm, which has the superscription, "A prayer of Moses, the Man of God," says: "Psalm ninety in dignity and deep religious feeling is second to none in the Psalter; but it may be questioned whether it does not presuppose conditions different from those of Moses' age; and had Moses been the author, it is natural to suppose that it would have been more archaic in style than it actually is."⁸ This way of settling questions is very characteristic of Driver.

But in assigning dates and authors at will, in the way that suits his theory, Canon Cheyne in his lectures on the Psalms takes the palm. In this work we have many such illustrations of this practice as the following: "Pre-Jeremian such highly spiritual Psalms (lxi. and lxii.) cannot be."⁹ "Such ripe fruit of spiritual religion could not, methinks, have been pro-

⁶ "History of Israel," p. 464.

⁸ "Introduction," p. 358.

⁷ "Lex Mosaica," p. 613.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

duced in the miseries and anxieties of that period," (namely of Jehoiachin); and therefore "the earliest possible date" (of Psalms xxii., xxxv., lxix.) is "the period which preceded Nehemiah's first journey to Jerusalem."¹⁰ "Davidic it (Psalm xix.) cannot be; fancy the worldly-minded, even though religious, David inditing a hymn in favor of a rich and varied hand-book of spiritual religion."¹¹ "The Jewish church in Isaiah's time was far too germinal to have sung these expressions of daring monotheism."¹² Proof of these assumptions is not deemed at all necessary. Such expressions as "it is natural to suppose," and "it may be questioned" do duty for proof with Driver and Cheyne.

But the instances in which there is an actual avowal of this unjustifiable method convey no adequate idea of the extent to which it is quietly assumed as an indubitable axiom, that the times to which the Pentateuch and other early books of the Old Testament are assigned were so barbaric and illiterate, as to give a general warrant for rejecting those early dates and authors, and substituting dates and authors in harmony with the theories of the higher critics. A large proportion of the results of the higher criticism is built on these assumed hypotheses concerning the religious and literary condition of the times, when the books of the Old Testament have been assumed to have been written.

The recent discoveries in Oriental archæology clearly show that the supposition, on which the critics have

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 164.

built such large conclusions, is not according to the facts; and create a strong presumption in favor of the contention of conservative scholars, for the early date of the Pentateuch and other books of the Old Testament. The inscriptions on the monuments, especially the discovery of the Tel-el-Marna tablets, has presented evidence to the existence of a degree of intelligence and literary culture in Egypt and Canaan, long before the time of the Hebrew Exodus, which supplies a refutation of the hypothesis to which I have referred; and deprived of force the arguments against the early date of the Pentateuch, which have been based upon the assumption that the literary and religious condition of the time of Moses was too crude to produce these writings.

The Rev. A. H. Sayce, LL.D., professor of Assyriology in the University of Oxford, in his book, "The Higher Critics and the Monuments," and in numerous articles, has presented facts of the greatest interest which throw a flood of light on this question. We learn that the world by which the Hebrews were surrounded, from the very dawn of their history, was pre-eminently a writing and reading one. Dr. Sayce says: "Long before the days of Moses, or even of Abraham, the Egyptians and Babylonians were peoples devoted to reading and writing; books and schools were multiplied among them, and libraries existed filled with the literary treasures of the past." The Tel-el-Marna discoveries are not mere inscriptions and records, but correspondence on ordinary topics, showing a wide diffusion of the ability to read and write.

Professor Sayce confidently says: "We now know that not only Babylonian beliefs, but the literature itself in which those beliefs were enshrined, had been brought to Palestine before the age of Moses. We also know that the beliefs which have left their traces on the Biblical history of the fall of man had been recorded in writing at a very early period."¹³

The Egyptians were not only a literary people at this early period. Dr. Howard Osgood quotes Chabas and Renouf as saying: "The recognised Egyptian code of morals was a very noble and refined one. None of the Christian virtues were forgotten in it." "The Book of the Dead" goes far to justify this testimony. Professor Sayce may well say: "To admit that the Israelites were once in Egypt, and yet deny them a knowledge of letters at the time they fled from it, may be consonant with the principles of the higher criticism; it is certainly not consonant with the principles of probability and common-sense."¹⁴

It is one of the strange anomalies of the higher critics that they constantly assume, in order to meet the emergencies of their evolutionary theory, that the Hebrews, whose religion possessed a Divine vitality which has made it an undying and expanding moral power in the world, were behind their heathen neighbors in religious culture and general intelligence. The "Ethical Monotheism," which Cheyne deems "too daring" for Isaiah's time, was not the late evolution which these critics imagine it to have been. To this the Pentateuch is an irrefragable witness.

¹³ Page 106.

¹⁴ "Lex Mosaica," p. 11.

In summing up the results of recent discoveries Professor Sayce says: "That primary assumption of the late use of writing for literary purposes in Palestine which, consciously or unconsciously, has done so much to wreck the belief of the critics in the earlier narratives of the Bible, has been shown to be utterly false. The cuneiform inscriptions have restored the historical credit of certain passages of the Pentateuch which had been resolved into myth, and have demonstrated the worthlessness of the arguments by which their mythic character had been maintained. The archæology of Genesis seems to show that the literary analysis of the book must be revised; and that the confidence with which one portion of a verse is assigned to one author and another portion of it to another, is a confidence begotten of the study of modern critical literature and not of the literature of the past."¹⁵ The early use of writing has been so incontestably proved that it can no longer be denied; yet critics who cannot deny it still maintain theories that were originated by men who based them on this false assumption about the crude literary state of Mosaic times.

Professor Sayce does not by any means stand alone. Other eminent archæologists hold similar views. Dr. Fritz Hommel, Professor of Semitic languages in the University of Munich, distinguished both as an Orientalist and an archæologist, in his recent work entitled, "Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments," takes a decided stand against the

¹⁵ "Higher Critics and the Monuments," p. 561.

conclusions of the higher critics respecting the date of the Pentateuch. He rejects, as contrary to convincing evidence, Wellhausen's unjust allegation, that the personal names of the Mosaic period found in the "Priests' Code" "had been deliberately manufactured in later times, after an earlier pattern, and that their testimony was consequently worthless." One main purpose of Dr. Hommel's work is to show from contemporary inscriptions, "that even from the time of Abraham onward personal names of the characteristically Mosaic type were in actual use among a section of the Semites of Western Asia, and that it is useless to talk any longer of a later post-Exilic invention."¹⁶ He maintains that Klosterman has conclusively proved the absolute credibility of the biblical account of the finding of the law in the time of Josiah, in a way that "excludes the possibility of any such subtle deception as that predicted by critics of the modern school."

Dr. Hommel maintains that there is conclusive proof that Deuteronomy was known to the prophet Hosea, and therefore cannot be a pious forgery of later times. The similar name formations, and the striking linguistic kinship shown to exist between the personal names in the "Priests' Code" and the ancient Arabic or Western Semitic names, and the evidence which this affords of the antiquity of the Pentateuch, are a most important feature of this acute and learned work. In the preface Dr. Hommel uses these significant words:

¹⁶ "Ancient Hebrew Tradition as Illustrated by the Monuments," p. 10.

"The monuments speak with no faltering tongue, and already I seem to see signs of the approach of a new era, in which men will be able to brush aside the cobweb theories of the so-called "higher critics" of the Pentateuch, and leaving such old-fashioned errors behind them, attain to a clearer perception of the real facts."¹⁷

Gaston Maspero, the great French Egyptologist, in his recent work, "The Struggles of the Nations, Egypt, Syria and Assyria," brings out important facts respecting the times of the Patriarchs, which confirm the Old Testament account. In spite of a marked leaning to negative critical theories, he vindicates the historical correctness of the account of the Exodus and other parts of the early history, that the higher critics have regarded as unreliable and mythical. His view of the history of these early times bears strongly against the assumption that they were times of ignorance, in which no literary or religious work of value could be produced.

It is very suggestive to note what slight evidence is deemed sufficient by some critics for hypotheses that lower the divine authority of the Bible. One example of this disposition is seen in the ready acceptance of the notion, that the Biblical accounts of Creation and the Flood were borrowed by the Hebrews from earlier heathen legends. Certain advanced critics and their ready disciples have taken for granted that any sign of the influence of Babylonian thought, or what is supposed to be such, in Genesis, must be ascribed to

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

the time of the Babylonian Exile, and be regarded as a proof of the late date of that book.

Even if it were admitted that the accounts of Creation and the Flood were borrowed from Babylonian sources—which we do not believe—there are unanswerably strong reasons for rejecting the conclusion that this borrowing took place at this late period. The cuneiform tablets show that long before the time of Moses, Palestine, though an Egyptian province, was under the dominating influence of Babylonian culture. The ancient Akkadians were the founders of Babylonian civilization. Terah and Abraham, the forefathers of the Hebrews, emigrated from “Ur of the Chaldees” to Canaan. It is a remarkable fact that recently Ur has been located; and as a result of excavations on its site, Akkadian inscriptions, giving an account of its foundation, have been discovered, which are probably among the most ancient of all known historic records. Haran, where Terah died, was under Babylonian influence.

In view of this early prevalence of Babylonian influence in that region, Dr. Sayce is more than justified in maintaining, that there is no longer any need of looking to the Babylonian Exile for an explanation of what are regarded as the Babylonian ideas, supposed to underlie the account of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis. This also applies to the account of the Flood. The incidents of that event were known in Israel long before the Exile. The so-called “Jehovist” document is admitted, even by higher critics, to be much older than the Exile, and yet it

contains an account of this event. There is unanswerable force in this question of Professor McCurdy, of Toronto University, in the *Homiletic Review* for August, 1897: "Is it possible that the Hebrew sacred writers were so devoid of traditional or other records relating to the beginning of things, that they had to wait till they were brought into close contact with another people, in order to get a starting-point for human history generally, or for their own national history?" Speaking of the institutions of Genesis the same writer remarks: "It would require an inversion of the whole history of the civil and religious life of the Hebrews, to assume that these institutions were acquired by them at the very close of their career as a nation." Yet there are some so wedded to the notion of late dates for all books of the Bible that, in spite of the weighty considerations to the contrary, they cling to the supposition that the Bible accounts of Creation and the Flood were borrowed from a heathen people at the time of the captivity.

Though Professor Sayce rejects the idea that the accounts of Creation and the Flood in Genesis should be assigned to the time of the Exile, he favors the opinion that the account of these events is of Babylonian origin. This view seems to be adopted chiefly because of the resemblance between the account in Genesis and the Babylonian poem, and what he deems signs that the Bible writers were acquainted with it. We confess we cannot see the force of Dr. Sayce's curious argument, that "the silent correction of the Babylonian polytheism is an eloquent testimony to the

writer's knowledge of the poem in which that polytheism was expressed." How the absence of all polytheistic ideas from the Bible account can be a testimony to a knowledge of a source characterized by these ideas, is certainly hard to understand. Would not the presence of polytheistic ideas in Genesis be a stronger ground for this claim? Let any one, who has no theory to support, peruse the Babylonian poem carefully, and it will not seem a feasible idea that the account in Genesis was a borrowed development from that rhapsody,

But the facts which Professor Sayce himself states, respecting the contrasts and differences between the two accounts, strongly support a contrary view. No doubt, there are points of resemblance between the Bible account and the Babylonian epic. This may indicate a common origin; but it does not settle the question of priority or originality. The differences are much more striking than the resemblances, as any one will see who carefully compares the poem with the Bible narrative.

Dr. Sayce fully admits this. He says: "The polytheism which underlies the one, with the thinly-veiled materialism which overlies it, is not more profoundly contrasted with the devout monotheism of the other, than is the absolute want of mythological details in Genesis with the cosmological myths embodied in the cuneiform poem. We pass, as it were, from the Iliad to sober history. Where the Assyrian or Babylonian poet saw the action of deified forces of nature, the Hebrew writer sees only the will of the supreme

God.”¹⁸ After pointing out the central ideas of the poem, he says: “Such ideas are the very reverse of those which inspire the narrative of Genesis.” Again: “While the Babylonian poem is intensely polytheistic, the biblical narrative of the deluge is intensely monotheistic.”

There was also a Babylonian Sabbath, of which some claim that the Hebrew Sabbath was an imitation; but Professor Sayce points out several important differences between the Hebrew and Babylonian Sabbaths, which show them to be very different things. The chief of these is, that “the Hebrew Sabbath is entirely divorced from all connection with Babylonian astronomy and the polytheistic worship with which it was bound up.” Does not the fact, that the main idea of the Biblical records is the over-ruling government of the one living and true God, vindicate their claim to an originality to which the poem can lay no claim? The accounts in Genesis constitute a coherent historic narrative. The Babylonian account is a fantastic epic poem. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the poem was a fanciful expansion of some of the facts in the Bible narrative on a polytheistic basis, by one who was a polytheist, than to suppose that the coherent monotheistic narrative of Genesis was extracted out of the Babylonian fantasia? In other words, we think when the simple and morally elevated accounts in Genesis are compared with the mythical and fantastic Babylonian epic, all unbiased students will see good reason to admit that it is much

¹⁸ “Higher Critics and the Monuments,” p. 71.

more likely that the simple and significant biblical accounts are the originals, and the Babylonian poems corrupt versions of the same events, than that the purer and loftier accounts in Genesis are merely the Babylonian legends, purified and stripped of their polytheistic superstitions, by some later Hebrew writer.

Prof. J. D. Davis, of Princeton, speaking of the story of Creation, says: "The Hebrew account is the intentional perpetuation of the basal doctrine of the origin of the universe." Of the account of the Flood in Genesis he says: "The Hebrew narrative, at least as a whole, has not been derived from the cuneiform; the accounts are independent, save in their common origin. For, be it observed, the Hebrew story is not simply the cuneiform tale stripped of its polytheism, but a variant version; for even after the removal of the polytheistic elements, the stories conflict."¹⁹

The Hebrews were no late creation. They had as ancient a pedigree as any other people. There is no reason to believe that the progenitors of the Hebrew people were inferior in culture and knowledge to the contemporary people of any other race. They were as likely to possess historic and religious records as any people of their time. Their possession of such traditions did not depend upon their national organization. In view of the facts in the case, there is good ground to admit what Professor McCurdy calls, "the strength of the plea that Abram and his people may have brought with them from their Babylonian home the whole body of traditions from the Creation story

¹⁹ "Genesis and Semitic Tradition," p. 120.

to that of Babel, which furnishes the material of the first eleven chapters of Genesis." Dr. Bissell says: "The elder Delitzsch used, in his classes, to express it as his opinion that Abraham, when he entered Canaan, brought with him from his Eastern home written as well as oral narratives, covering the facts of the earlier parts of Genesis."²⁰

Unlike those "scholars" who take every sign of similarity between the Babylonian legends and Genesis, as a positive proof of the late Exilic composition of the parts of Genesis that bears these signs, the eminent Orientalist, Professor Hommel of Munich, in the learned work to which we have already referred, maintains that the absence of late Babylonian and Aramaic loan-words in the "Priest's Code" affords a strong argument for its early date. He shows that words in these writings date back to the early Babylonian period, and belong to a totally different category from the neo-Babylonian words which occur in Ezekiel. He also has been led to conclude that "by his migration from Chaldea, Abraham's higher and purer creed was preserved from absorption into the Babylonian polytheism, a fate which must have inevitably befallen it." Dr. Hommel forcibly maintains that "a people with such a past religious history as the children of Israel, would certainly have no need to rely on the subjugated peoples of Palestine for accounts of the Creation, the Fall, the Deluge, and their early progenitors." Referring to the Bible account of Creation he says: "I NOW NO LONGER

²⁰ "Genesis in Colors," p. viii.

HESITATE TO SAY, THAT THE MONOTHEISTIC CONCEPTION OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT, AND ESPECIALLY THE 'PRIESTLY CODE,' MUST, COMPARED WITH THE POLYTHEISTIC VERSION, BE REGARDED AS THE ORIGINAL."²¹

Professor McCurdy has gone over this question very thoroughly in his articles in the *Homiletic Review*. After giving all due consideration to the arguments for contrary conclusions, his judgment is, that the balance of probability is in favor of those early accounts coming through Abram. There is great force in his remark: "The Hebrew record stands independently as a part of a great work of the national literature, and we can only concede that the material has been taken immediately from outside the Hebrew realm, when forced to that conclusion by evidence that satisfies all the conditions." No such evidence has been produced. It goes far to prove that a partial bias to the speculations of the day, rather than sound scholarship, is the cause of the ready acceptance of the anti-biblical view, that some who regard themselves as Christian scholars accept that view, without "evidence that satisfies all the conditions." The late Prof. E. C. Bissell forcibly says: "He who believes that God revealed Himself to primitive man as one God, as the Bible tells us, will be likely to see in the Akkadian story a polytheistic corruption of an original monotheistic account, and as such strongly confirmatory of the historicity of Genesis."²² We have dwelt upon this theory at some length, because it is one of the

²¹ "Ancient Hebrew Tradition," p. 310.

²² "Genesis in Colors," p. xiv.

rationalist ways of disparaging the Hebrew Scriptures, and undermining their inspiration and authority.

It is significant that the import of these discoveries of ancient literature has been so generally ignored by the higher critics. Professor Driver and some others have, indeed, made the most of any concessions of the archæologists which favor any of their theories. But the fact that on some points they agree with the critics vindicates their independence, and gives greater weight to their statements against them. It is certain the radical critics have not fairly faced the consequences of the facts, in their bearing on the critical assumptions by which late dates for the Pentateuch and the Psalms have been advocated. Professor Osgood says: "Both Driver and Cornill imagine a state of society and religion, before the age of David, that is in blank contradiction to the facts shown by the monuments. . . . But if these results are true, as the monuments prove, on what ground can these critics justify their complete silence and exclusion of all this testimony to the conditioning environment of the Old Testament? The Old Testament can no longer be fairly treated under conceptions of history that are antiquated, and denied by the monuments of every museum in Europe. The new view of ancient history must come in and be made a part of the problem. And when that occurs the foundations of the theory of these 'Introductions' (Driver's and Cornill's) will pass away with the rushing stream as sand with the flood."²³

²³ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1893.

As regards the inferences based upon supposed literary conditions at certain times, Dr. Sayce truly says: "The critic has made his own ignorance the measure of the credibility of an ancient document." With reference to religion, we have no means of knowing the religious condition of the people of Israel except the Old Testament. To substitute an imaginary condition of things for its testimony is utterly unscientific. It is blamable enough to base destructive negative conclusions upon an imaginary condition of things, of the existence of which there is no evidence; but it is still worse to keep on building on hypotheses that have been shown to be contrary to the historic facts.

CHAPTER VI.

UNWARRANTED CONCLUSIONS BASED ON ALLEGED SILENCES OF SCRIPTURE.

Partial Statements of Higher Critics—Neglect of Mosaic Laws Accounted For—Historians and Prophets Refer to Pentateuchal History and Rites—Conclusive Testimony of Amos Hosea, and Later Prophets—The Facts not Fairly Met by the Higher Critics.

THE chief argument in support of the theory that Deuteronomy and the Levitical laws are late productions, and not as they assume to be of Mosaic origin and authority, is the alleged silence of the historic and early prophetic books respecting the laws and ritual observances contained in these parts of the Pentateuch, and their non-observance by the people. The higher critics declare that there is no evidence in these books that the laws in Deuteronomy were known before the time of King Josiah, or that the laws and ritual in the so-called "Priests' Code" were known and observed till after the Babylonian Exile.

The late Prof. Robertson Smith says: "The theology of the prophets before Ezekiel has no place for the system of priestly sacrifice and ritual." On the strength of these alleged silences, this school of critics hold that they are justified in asserting that these

writings are not Mosaic either in time or authorship ; but that they were written at late dates by unknown authors, the laws being placed in a fictitious historic setting adapted to make the impression that they were Mosaic.

Even if the references to the laws of Moses were as scanty as the critics try to make out, this would not prove that there were no such laws in existence. Neither prophet nor historian would dwell on what did not concern his main purpose. The Mosaic origin of the laws was not questioned, and did not need to be vindicated. The history in the Old Testament is brief and incomplete, and therefore not likely to refer to all that took place in these times. In other national histories the most common usages are taken for granted. Their very commonness often causes the omission of specific mention of them. Besides, every one knows that the neglect of the Mosaic laws is fully accounted for without assuming their non-existence, by the frequent statements respecting their non-observance and violation in times of religious degeneracy, when the people conformed to the idolatrous ways of their heathen neighbors. This was the common complaint of the prophets. Elijah was disheartened, "because," as he said, "the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword." (1 Kings xix. 14.)

Have we not seen something very similar to this silence in Christian history ? Luther's ignorance of the Bible, though a priest, indicates very general ignorance. According to the reasoning of the higher

critics, the general ignorance of the Bible before the Reformation, and especially before the invention of printing, might be taken as a proof that the Scriptures were then unknown. The neglect of a law does not prove it unknown or non-existent. Not more being said about the priests or priestly ritual by the prophets, may be accounted for by the fact that the priests were often corrupt, and the Levitical services at times associated with heathen customs which made them obnoxious to the prophets. Their writings plainly show that such prophets as Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah, were reformers, who called back the people of Israel to forms of religious worship from which they had fallen. The idolatrous worship in the high places was adopted in imitation of the heathen peoples around them, and was not their historic religion.

But the necessities of the evolutionary theory compel its advocates to assume, in spite of the facts, that these prophets were revolutionists, introducing a new religion instead of the popular religion of the people. Prof. Robertson Smith regarded it as demonstrated, that the priestly legislation in the Pentateuch did not exist before the Exile—"that it can no longer be disputed that the ideas of the prophets do not pre-suppose those of the priestly parts of the Pentateuch." Dr. Driver says: "The pre-Exilic period shows no indication of the legislation of P. (Priests' Code) being in operation."¹ Stade ascribed the merit of the rise of monotheistic religion to "the prophetic movement and the result of the political fortunes of the people."

¹ "Introduction," p. 29.

Wellhausen, speaking of Elijah the prophet, says: "To him first was it revealed that we have not in the various departments of nature a variety of forces worthy of worship; but that there exists over all but one Holy One and one Mighty One, who reveals Himself not in nature, but in law and righteousness in the world of man."² Professor Toy says: "In the period of the Judges He (Jehovah) is to Israel what Kemosh is to Ammon." Such views seem to eliminate Moses and his work from the history. According to Wellhausen, "Amos was the founder and the purest type of a new phase of prophecy," and it is alleged that these early writing prophets, in their introduction of the movement against the earlier religion of the people, were influenced by "ethical motives, which manifested themselves in them *for the first time in history.*"

Unless these assertions can be justified by sober historical criticism of the Old Testament writings, they are of no weight. Assertions that a certain prophet was the first to teach some religious truth, if they have nothing to sustain them but the conjectures of partial critics, can only be regarded as assumptions rendered necessary to help out opinions that require their support. Our ignorance of the condition of things at any past period cannot justify the fabrication of an imaginary history, in harmony with our particular notions or speculations.

The alleged silences concerning the laws contained in the Pentateuch, on which the radical critics have

² "History of Israel," p. 462.

built so largely, we emphatically deny. On the contrary, it has been conclusively proved that there are in the historic and prophetic books of the Old Testament, just such references to the Mosaic laws and to the history contained in the Pentateuch, as we would expect to find if the Bible conception of the history be true; but which are not consistent with the late dates required by the evolutionist theory. The fact that these references are mainly implied and incidental makes them stronger as evidence than if they were more direct and designed. Where the references are most explicit, the higher critics say they were made for a purpose, and reject them.

The best presentation of the argument from the testimony of the prophets is that by Prof. James Robertson, in his "Early Religion of Israel." Dr. Harman's essay in "Moses and His Recent Critics;" Dr. Sharpe's essay on "The Northern Kingdom," in "Lex Mosaica;" an article in the *Nashville Methodist Review* for March, 1897, by Dr. Newton, of Japan; and a series of articles in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, by Dr. Hayman of England, also ably present the argument from the early prophets, in refutation of the hypothesis that the teaching of Amos, Hosea and Micah was a new religion, different from the historic religion of the people of Israel.

Inasmuch as the higher critics deny the reliability of the historic books of the Old Testament, though not accepting their view, yet in order to find common ground for a starting point, Professor Robertson takes Amos and Hosea, the earliest writing prophets, and

examines the evidence they present in favor of the Mosaic origin of the early religion of Israel. It is admitted on all hands that these prophecies are genuine, and that they were written at least early in the eighth century, B.C., long before the dates which have been assigned to Deuteronomy or the "Priests' Code" by the higher critics. A thorough and critical examination of these two prophetic books conclusively shows the following facts: That these prophets were reformers, and not revolutionists; that they do not assume to be introducing a new religion; that they are calling the people back to the observance of the divine laws they had neglected and broken; that they refer to prophetic men who had preceded them and taught the same truths; that they evidently refer to Mosaic laws and ordinances, which the critics ask us to believe were the productions of much later times; that "they pre-suppose for the nation of Israel a certain religious standing, which rests on an antecedent history to which they pointedly and repeatedly refer." We cannot give even an outline of Dr. Robertson's work. It is not, however, too much to say, that it fully justifies the confidence which the author expresses in the preface, when he says: "I believe a sober and unprejudiced criticism will show that Israel, at the dawn of its national existence, had a very exalted conception of God and a high rule of duty; and that these things were neither borrowed from their neighbors nor excogitated by themselves."³

The volume of evidence which the Old Testament

furnishes on this branch of the subject is large and very convincing. We can only give a brief outline of the reasons for believing that these prophecies were not a new religion, as the higher critics allege, and a few illustrations, selected out of the many references in the earlier prophets and historic books, to the Mosaic laws and early history of Israel.

The language of a people fairly indicates their position in the scale of civilization and progress. It is admitted that there are no signs of crudeness about the language of Amos and Hosea. The literary style is not such as indicates the beginning of a literary period. Professor Robertson says: "The style of Amos and Hosea is already as good as the Hebrew ever attained." Even Prof. Robertson Smith says: "To the unprejudiced judgment, the prophecy of Amos appears one of the best examples of pure Hebrew style."⁴ Dr. Driver bears similar testimony to the style of Amos. Of Hosea he says: "The style is compressed and forceful." Such literary productions suppose readers of intelligence and culture, capable of understanding what was addressed to them. These prophecies are evidently in succession to an earlier religious literature, of which the people had some knowledge. The references in the historic books to books which have not come down to us prove this. Three hundred years before this time, "Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord." (1 Samuel x. 25.) This long interval was not a literary blank, as these critics assume.

⁴ "Prophets of Israel," p. 125.

The religious teaching of Amos and Hosea presents lofty ideas of God's character and human duty, and pre-supposes a high degree of religious intelligence in the people to whom they addressed their messages. They give no sign that "ethical monotheism" was a novel idea. There is nothing in the prophecies of either of these prophets which indicates that they are asking the people to give up an ancient historic religion for a new one. There is no mystery or inconsistency in their condemnation of the worship in the high places in Bethel, Dan and Gilgal, which never had Divine approval, or prophetic sanction. According to Hosea (x. 8) these high places were "the sin of Israel." But Wellhausen holds that they were the authorized religious worship. He calls them "Jehovah's favorites." He says: "It was Amos, Hosea and Isaiah who introduced the movement against the old popular worship of the high places."

The history in the books of Kings, so far as it refers to this period, confirms the picture which these prophets give of the religious condition of the people. Because there is no account of the condemnation of the high places by Elijah, no one is justified in assuming that he approved of them, no more than that Isaiah approved of them. Hosea and Amos never speak as if Israel had been formerly taught to regard Jehovah as a mere tribal god, like Chemosh or Moloch. He is the Creator of all things. The people are exhorted to "seek Him that maketh the seven stars and Orion." (Amos v. 8.) Though the first words of Amos are, "The Lord shall roar from Zion, and utter His voice

from Jerusalem," yet the threatened judgments that follow are against other nations as well as Ephraim and Judah, showing that He rules over all, It is "He that formeth the mountains and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought" (iv. 13). He is essentially holy (iv. 2.) The ways of Jehovah are right. (Hosea xiv. 9.) In Him the fatherless find mercy. (xiv. 3.) He has no pleasure in formal rites. (Amos v. 21-24.) He desires "mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hosea vi. 6.) Though His anger is kindled because of their wickedness, yet He says: "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not man." (Hosea xi. 9.) When we find critics declaring that any Psalm containing lofty ideas of God and righteousness could not have been written in such times as those of Hosea, Amos and Isaiah, but must be assigned to the critics' post-Exilic golden age, it is impossible to resist the conviction, that we see in such assumptions an illustration of the warping power of a pre-conceived theory, to which everything must be made to yield.

The evidence is overwhelming that Amos and Hosea regarded the people of Israel and Judah, to whom they addressed their admonitions and warnings, as backslidden peoples who had forsaken God's ordinances and broken his laws, by adopting semi-heathenish forms of worship. The northern kingdom had sinned worse than Judah, but both are called back to the old Mosaic religion. If the prophets and the people both knew that the worship which these pro-

phets condemned was the authorized historic religion, how could the people be justly blamed and threatened with divine punishment for not observing laws of which, according to the higher critics, they had no knowledge? The prophets must have been confident that the people would recognize the truth of their charges, or they would not have made them.

The threatenings of punishment which Amos delivered against the heathen peoples were for deeds of cruelty and wrong; but Judah's punishment is not to be turned away, "because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept His commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers walked." (ii. 4.) Their departure from God is repeatedly characterized as spiritual whoredom. "For the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord." (Hosea i. 2.) Samaria is to be punished, "because she hath rebelled against her God." (xiii. 16.) Again and again the complaint is made, "Yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord," implying that by their corrupt worship they had forsaken God. Referring to Israel as the covenant people, Jehovah says: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." (iii. 12.) Because of their forsaking God, Israel is threatened with a famine—"not a famine of bread or thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (viii. 11), which clearly implies that they had previously been blest with the privilege of hearing His words in prophetic teaching, without improving the opportunity. The words in Hosea viii. 1, "Because they have transgressed my

covenant and trespassed against my law," have an evident reference to the Mosaic legislation. Hosea says: "Israel hath cast off the thing that is good." (viii. 3.) But if Israel was observing the ancient religion, as the higher critics say, from what had the people fallen away? God says by the prophet: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I also will reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me, seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God." (iii. 6.) This clearly implies that there were laws which it was the priest's duty to teach to the people. In Hosea viii. 12, a code of written laws is expressly referred to, "I have written unto him (Ephraim) the great things of my law (Torah), but they were counted as a strange thing." An attempt has been made to break the force of this passage by explaining it as a hypothetical statement. But Delitzsch, Orelli, Smend and Harman interpret it in the past tense, as the sense and connection require. It plainly refers to a written law, which must have contained codes of worship as well as moral precepts, else the condemned worship of Ephraim could not be a violation of them.

There is also in these prophets distinct references to previous prophetic teachers, whose similar warnings and counsels had been disregarded. Hosea represents Jehovah as saying: "Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth." (vi. 5.) "I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets." (xii. 10.)

Similarly Amos represents God as saying to Israel: "And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites." (ii. 11.) If these former prophets had not condemned the same sins and enjoined the same religious duties as Hosea and Amos, there would be no point in blaming the people for rejecting their teaching.

The incidental references in Hosea and Amos to events in the early history of the Hebrews, which are recorded in the Pentateuch and other historic books that the critics declare to be late evolutions, furnish convincing evidence that these prophets and the people of their times had a knowledge of the history contained in these early books. We have in these writings of the ninth century, B.C., references to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Amos iv. 12); the birth of Jacob and Esau (Hosea xii. 3); Jacob wrestling with the Angel (Hosea xii. 4); Jacob's service with Laban (Hos. xii. 12); the Exodus from Egypt and the forty years in the wilderness (Amos ii. 10); Israel joining himself to Baalpeor (Hos. ix. 10); the wickedness of the Gibeonites (Hos. ix. 9); the giving of Saul as king to Israel (Hos. xiii. 11); David's making musical instruments (Amos vi. 5); and "the songs of the temple" (viii. 3). It is a significant fact, that "Amos and Hosea are found to hold essentially, for the period succeeding Moses, the same scheme of history, which is by modern critics pronounced to be late and unhistorical."

Still more significant are the direct references by these prophets to Mosaic laws and rites, of which the

accounts are given in those parts of the Pentateuch, which the critics say were written by unknown authors long after the time of Amos and Hosea. Only a few examples can be given. In Hosea ii. 11 we read, "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts," which manifestly refers to the institutions of the Pentateuch, some of which Israel mixed with heathen customs in the worship of the high places. In chapter xii. 9, Hosea speaks of the Feast of Tabernacles, referring to Leviticus xxiii. 42, 43, where the dwelling in booths is enjoined. "Their sacrifices shall be to them as the bread of mourners, all that eat thereof shall be polluted." (ix. 4.) In this there is a reference to Deuteronomy xxvi. 14. In Deuteronomy viii., we read: "Lest when thou hast eaten and are full. . . . Then thy heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God," etc. In Hosea xii. 6, God is represented by the prophet as saying: "They were filled and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me." Is there not here a direct reference to Deuteronomy?

In Amos ii. 11, it is said, "But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink," which assumes their knowledge of the law of the Nazarites contained in Numbers vi. "Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts." (v. 22.) This evidently refers to the offerings enjoined in the Mosaic law. "Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven" (iv. 5.), undoubtedly refers to Leviticus (vii.

13), where the worshipper is directed to offer "leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering."

But we are under no obligation to confine ourselves to the evidence afforded by Amos and Hosea on this question. Micah and Isaiah wrote only a little later than these prophets, and they also gave evidence of the same knowledge of the laws recorded in the Pentateuch. As already remarked, the fact that these references to the law are mostly incidental and indirect makes their testimony the stronger; for they assume that the people know that there were divine rules of life, and an order of worship which they had neglected. Isaiah, speaking of those who undertake to teach the people, says: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, there is no morning for them." (Isa. viii. 20.) Again: "They have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts." (v. 24.) Micah, one of the early writing prophets, refers to the deliverance from Egypt, to Balaam's answer to Balak; and the law of life given in Micah, vi. 8, is evidently based on Deuteronomy x. 12. The book of Joshua, which presents strong evidence of being a true history, and not a fictitious supplement to Deuteronomy, repeatedly refers to the book of the law of Moses, and to the promises made to the great prophet as recorded in the Pentateuch. Even in the book of Judges, in which the history is so brief and fragmentary, there are several clear references to the Mosaic laws. In both Joshua and Judges there are records of several things done, which were in accord with laws in

Deuteronomy, and can only be accounted for as being done in obedience to these laws.

The contention that before Josiah's time the high places were authorized places of worship, and that the law of central worship in Deuteronomy was a new rule, which shows the book to be a late production, has not been supported by any adequate proof. The law recorded in Exodus xx. 24, is not really at variance with the law of central worship in Deuteronomy xii. 11. In both the thought is that the worship is to be in the place that God chooses. The law of central worship was known and observed long before Josiah's time. Was not Solomon's temple a place of central worship 300 years before the time of Josiah? If Deuteronomy was written at the date assigned to it by most of the higher critics, why does it contain no reference to the temple service or to Shiloh? If there had been no knowledge that central worship had been enjoined by Moses, why were the children of Israel angry with Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, for building another altar on their side of Jordan, "besides the altar of the Lord our God that was before his tabernacle. (See Joshua xxii.) As Professor Strack points out, "the command which the Book of the Covenant also lays down to appear three times a year before the Lord (Exodus xxiii. 17), decidedly points to a centralization of the worship." In Judges xviii. 31, we read of "the house of God at Shiloh," which we learn from Samuel ii. 22 meant the "Tabernacle of the Congregation." In Judges xxi. 19, mention is made of a "feast of the Lord in

Shiloh yearly." In Jeremiah vii. 12 God speaks of "my place which was in Shiloh where I set my name at the first." In Judges xx. 28, we are told that Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, stood before the ark of the covenant in those days. It is evident from, these historic records that Shiloh was a central place of worship, and that the "Tabernacle of the Congregation" was a historic reality, and not a fiction, as the higher critics maintain.

In the 17th chapter of 2nd Kings the writer, referring to the period before the Assyrian captivity, mentions among the sins of Israel which caused God's anger against them, that "they built them high places in all their cities," and that "they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them." And before the time when it is alleged Deuteronomy was produced we are told that Hezekiah "removed the high places." (2 Kings xviii. 4.) And yet the higher critics assume it to be an unquestionable fact, that there was no law or established usage of central worship, before the 18th year of Josiah's reign, in order to support the theory that Deuteronomy was a late production.

There is good ground to believe that the instances of offering sacrifices in different places, which are quoted by the higher critics as evidence against the idea of an obligation for a central place of worship, were exceptional either as to the occasion or the character of the persons, such as Samuel, Gideon, and Manoah. Samuel sacrificing at Mizpah and Ramah, and not at Shiloh, has been accounted for by the ark

of God being taken by the Philistines, which caused the law of the central sanctuary to be held in abeyance for a time. It is the heathenish character of the worship in the high places, rather than offering worship apart from the central sanctuary, that is so strongly condemned by prophets and historians.

It is alleged by the critics that according to Deuteronomy all the Levites were priests, and that the division of priests and Levites in the "Priests' Code" was a new order, which proves that part of the Pentateuch to be of late date. This is mainly built on the supposition that the words, "the priests, the Levites," in Deuteronomy imply that all the Levites were priests. Wellhausen says: "The distinction between priest and Levite, which Ezekiel introduces and justifies as an innovation, according to the Priestly Code has always existed." He is here referring to the degradation of the Levites, in Ezekiel's vision, who had ministered at the high places. The Rev. F. E. Spencer, in his essay on "Ezekiel and the Priestly School," shows that this conclusion is based on a wrong interpretation of the words, "to do the office of a priest unto me." After stating that the Levites were "assistant priests," Mr. Spencer shows that "the Levites are in the visionary Temple degraded because of their original defilement, not from the distinct duties of the priests of Aaron's line, which they never rightly had, but from their near association with the priests proper in representative worship to less honorable functions." Are not the historic references to Eleazer, Phinehas, Eli and

Zadok evidence that the office of high priest was no late distinction? In 2 Chronicles (xxx. 16) we read that the priests and Levites "stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God." This is said of the time of Hezekiah, long before the time assigned to the "Priests' Code," in which it is said this distinction is introduced. This alone disproves the critics' supposition, unless it be regarded as false on that account. It has been forcibly said: "The theory of Judaism must be squared with its acknowledged records, not the acknowledged records with the theory." The argument based on the supposed difference respecting priests and Levites, in Deuteronomy and the Levitical ritual, is another illustration of drawing large conclusions from doubtful premises.

Our space will allow us to give only a few of the passages from the historic books, the Psalms, and the later prophets, which plainly show that the history and laws of the Pentateuch were known to the people of Israel. Psalms that eminent Hebrew scholars assign to David make as much reference to Pentateuchal facts and laws as those that are assigned to post-Exilic times. In the 18th Psalm, which even such German critics as De Wette, Schrader, Hitzig and Ewald admit to be by David, the psalmist says: "For all His judgments were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me." "Judgment" and "Statutes" are Pentateuchal terms.

But the later books have also important testimony to the same truth. The evidence they present does

not warrant any one in assuming that the references to the law, in Jeremiah and the later prophets and latest Psalms, are to books manufactured under false pretences in the way the critics have imagined. Whatever may be the date of such Psalms as the 19th, the 1st, and 119th, their godly writers manifestly cherish a profound conviction of the divine authorship of the "law of the Lord" and the "statutes of the Lord," of which they speak so reverently. It is impossible to reconcile their devout language with the idea that Deuteronomy and the other laws of the Pentateuch were mainly the work of designing priests and unknown redactors.

The prophet Ezekiel, who lived in the time of the Exile, is assumed by Kuenen and Wellhausen to have been the real father and designer of the Levitical system, which it is alleged Ezra and other priests completed at a later time. But in the 20th chapter of his prophecy Ezekiel delivers the message which God gave him for the elders of Israel. It consists of a review of God's dealings with Israel in bringing them out of Egypt, and rebukes of their ingratitude in despising the statutes and judgments He had given them. He says: "I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do he shall even live in them." Here the very words of Leviticus (xviii. 5) are quoted. Can any one, who is not warped by prejudice, believe for a moment that the prophet here refers to some recently concocted laws

in which he himself had a hand? or to anything but the Mosaic laws and statutes?

The same question may be fitly asked respecting the explicit references to the laws of Moses in Ezra and Nehemiah. In these books we have such language as the following: "And builded the altar of the Lord God of Israel to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the laws of Moses, the man of God," (Ezra iii. 2.) "And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses." (vi. 18). In Nehemiah we read: "So they read in the book, in the law of God." (viii. 8.) "And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month." (viii. 14.) "And commandedst them precepts, statutes and laws by the hand of Moses thy servant." (ix. 14.) "The people covenanted to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God." (x. 29.) These are direct references to Pentateuchal laws, which were then complete. Not only Nehemiah, but Ezra, to whom the completion of the Levitical system is ascribed by the critics, repeatedly attributes the laws to which they conformed their worship to Moses. Did these holy men mislead the people, in calling these ordinances the laws of Moses? How was it possible to make the people universally believe that these were the laws of Moses, if they were not really such? Men must be strongly predisposed to believe,

who accept such an unreasonable hypothesis as truth. Are we to believe that Ezra knew the Tabernacle was a late invention, and concealed this from the people? The great scholar Franz Delitzsch says: "We hold it as absolutely inconceivable that the Elohistic portions about the Tabernacle and its furniture should be an historic fiction of the post-Exilic age."

Malachi, the latest of the Hebrew prophets, among his closing words represents the Lord of Hosts as saying, "Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments," (Mal. iv. 4.) It was manifestly the firm belief of this inspired prophet, that the Pentateuch was what the Jewish and Christian churches through the ages have held it to be, and not the evolved patch-work which the higher critics assert that it is. The references of the prophets to the history and laws in the Pentateuch are just what we would expect, from what we know of the history of the people of Israel and the character and mission of the prophets. No one, who had not a theory to maintain, would deny that there is overwhelming evidence that the Pentateuchal laws and history were known to the people of Israel, long before the time at which the higher critics say they were written. Well may Professor Sayce say: "It is strange how preconceived theories will cause the best scholars to close their eyes to obvious facts."

It may be asked: How do the critics meet all this evidence? It is assumed by them that these references refer to oral traditions or brief ancient

laws and customs, which at later times were made the basis of the expanded legislation in the Pentateuch. This admission of some foundation germs seems to be made to conciliate opponents, who complain of what has been expunged. It has no historic foundation on which to rest. Those who reject, as false, the account of the origin of these laws given in the Pentateuch itself, have no right to substitute in its place an imaginary history of their origin, of which there is no evidence. Those who reject the Scripture account, "go blindly groping along the centuries in search of authors." In any other case, similar references to a known book, not only to facts, but to laws, usages, and characteristic expressions, would be accepted as satisfactory proof of a knowledge of such a work. But these critics are against the facts, because the facts are against them.

Passages in Isaiah, Hosea and Jeremiah, in which Jehovah declares his aversion to the sacrifices of the wicked and hypocritical are cited by Prof. Robertson Smith and other critics, as a proof that sacrifices are condemned by the prophets, and are contrary to God's will and without his authority. This is not justifiable. It is the way in which the sacrifices are offered and the character of the offerers that are condemned. This is seen from the fact that prayer and Sabbath observance are embraced in the same condemnation. The words in Hosea vi. 6, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings," shows it is not a prohibition of sacrifice that is meant. When St. Paul says, "For Christ sent

me not to baptise, but to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor. i. 17), he does not mean to reject Christian Baptism.

It is very inconsistent for these critics to maintain that Isaiah and other great prophets condemned all sacrifices, and then to represent Ezekiel and Ezra as establishing as Mosaic and divine the forms of worship, which, according to the critical theory, Jehovah had forbidden. In the later Psalms, in what Prof. Robertson Smith calls the "Service Book of the Second Temple," when the sacrificial ritual was in full use, similar expressions exalting spiritual worship, and disparaging sacrifice occur. But from these the critics do not draw the same conclusions as they draw from the statements in the prophets. Everyone knows that where a Christian preacher exalts spiritual religion and condemns trusting to rites and formal ceremonies, it should not be taken as proof that he condemns the sacraments and Christian ordinances.

But the higher critics evidently feel that these replies do not meet the necessities of their theory. They are forced to boldly assume that the references to the Mosaic laws, not in harmony with their scheme, are interpolations of redactors or partisan writers, made in the interests of the priests. In other words, they deny that there is any reference to Pentateuchal laws and history in the prophets and historic books, after they have expunged distinct references which contradict their critical theories. Some examples of this practice will be given in a succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

QUESTIONABLE METHODS OF HIGHER CRITICS—"THE CANONIZATION OF CONJECTURE."

Miscalled Scientific Criticism—A Preconceived Theory of Evolution Determines Conclusions—Theories Built on Mere Conjecture—Wellhausen on the Chronicles—Gratuitous Creation of Redactors—Thoughts Suggested by These Methods—Adverse Statements of Biblical Scholars.

A GREAT deal is said in some quarters about the "scientific" methods of modern critics. It is commonly assumed that the methods used are a guaranty for the correctness of their conclusions. Some writers seem to think that when they declare that they have used "scientific" modes of studying the Bible, this should silence all objections. But if "science is knowledge gained and verified by exact observation and correct thinking," the methods of some of the leading higher critics have no just claim to be called scientific.

In spite of their claims to superior critical modes of study, prominent critics, in advocating their distinguishing views, practice methods of proof which would not be tolerated in any ordinary literary

or scientific discussion. Unproved assertions, theoretical conjectures, appeals to the authority of partial critics, assumptions that verbal difference of style proves different authors and dates, magnifying the significance of trivial things that appear to favor their views, and the arbitrary rejection of whatever in Scripture is against their preconceived theory, are unpleasantly prominent where one has a right to expect attested facts and logical arguments.

The learning, ability and sincerity of many of these critics may be freely admitted ; but these qualities do not bestow freedom from partial feeling, or give that judicial sobriety of judgment which is essential to arriving at true conclusions on grave and difficult questions, such as are embraced in the critical study of the Scriptures.

The radical error of the rationalist critics—the key of their whole scheme and methods—is found in their practice of adjusting everything to the preconceived theory that the Scriptures are the product of evolution, like other ethnic religions. Some indeed admit that this has taken place under divine supervision ; but the scheme does not require this. This evolutionary theory of the Old Testament, with its assignment of late dates for the different books, has, as we have already intimated, evidently commended itself to many critics, mainly because by assuming long periods for the growth of religious ideas, it appears to render direct revelations of truth less necessary to account for the contents of the books of the Bible.

We freely admit that evolution, or the gradual

development of higher or more perfect forms from lower or germinal forms, is seen in nature. Gradual development is one of God's methods of accomplishing His purposes. The oak is evolved from the acorn. Nor do we deny the development of doctrine in the Scriptures and in the history of the Church. But where it is assumed that evolution, which is a mode or process, is a cause that accounts for all things, and that it is the only mode by which force operates, this assumption cannot be harmonized with the facts of Divine Revelation, with Divine and human freedom of action, or with the Incarnation and character of Christ, who assuredly was not a product of evolution. Any theory of evolution which denies or limits God's freedom of action, or human freedom, must be wrong. If the laws of nature which operate with such great uniformity, are not inconsistent with human freedom of action, why should it be assumed that the law of evolution is inconsistent with Divine freedom? The way in which evolution is commonly regarded since the promulgation of Darwin's views, as if it was the cause of all things, is well known. But the application of evolution to the origin of the books of the Bible, in the sense of being the cause, cannot be justified by attested facts and sound arguments.

There is good ground to say that most of the questionable conclusions of modern criticism give evidence, that they are the result of the previous adoption of the evolutionary hypothesis of the Bible, rather than the outcome of a scholarly and unprejudiced examination of the facts, relating to the books

or passages which are the subjects under consideration.

With a large class of critics, every question that arises in the critical study of the Bible has to be settled in harmony with this theory. The facts have to be adjusted to the hypothesis. On many critical questions one can tell beforehand what their verdict will be, without any knowledge of the arguments by which it will be advocated. The decision will be what the assumed hypothesis requires. With many of the evolutionary critics every interpretation of Scripture that implies a distinct supernatural revelation of religious truth or future events, must be ignored or explained away so as not to conflict with their critical creed. Does not this fact throw doubt on their conclusions? This underlying dogma is often assumed where it is not openly avowed; and even where it is repudiated by those who profess faith in the supernatural in some sense. Men sometimes continue to profess faith in the supernatural, after they have adopted schemes which virtually supersede belief in the miraculous interposition of a personal God in human affairs.

It is a pertinent remark of a modern writer that "when a man adopts, even tentatively, an hypothesis, he is likely to undergo a temptation to cease to be impartial in his research. Once adopted, the facts must adjust themselves to the theory, or suffer the consequence." For example, if the evolutionist theory, that there is no predictive reference to the historic Christ in Old Testament prophecy, be adopted by any

one, as a matter of course he must empty every Messianic prophecy of its predictive meaning, and every New Testament statement respecting the fulfilment of prophecy must be explained away into a mere "application," so as to harmonize with this negative theory—however unscientific and unjustifiable such a procedure may be.

Coming to the study of the Scriptures with a preconceived theory, as to the way in which they were produced, makes the work of such critics largely consist of learned and ingenious efforts to bring the recorded facts and teaching of the sacred writings into line with their fundamental critical canons, rather than to determine what is the direct and indirect testimony of the Bible respecting itself. It has been well said: "All the labor bestowed upon every part of the Hebrew literature falls to the ground, if the method of enquiry is one which does not admit of trustworthy results."

The critical methods of many of the higher critics have been fitly called "the canonization of conjecture." It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the extent to which the extreme conclusions of the advanced critics rest on speculative conjecture. We do not object to the use of hypotheses or "guesses at truth," as a means of discovering what is true. Even erroneous conjectures may be stepping-stones to better things. What we are protesting against is the common practice of suggesting a conjectural solution of some important critical problem, and then proceeding to treat this supposition as if it were an attested fact, on which other conclusions may be built.

All who are familiar with the writings of Cheyne, Driver, Briggs, Robertson Smith, and Wellhausen, their master, know that this is a common practice of writers of this school. Without a vestige of historic proof, on some slight pretext, a psalm or prophecy is assigned to the latest possible date; and then a supposed reference to it in some other book of Scripture is taken as evidence that this book is a still later production. It is surprising on what very slight evidence these critics accept every notion that favors their theory; but they do not fail to subject all opposing facts and statements to unsparing condemnation. Difficulties in Scripture, which afford any pretext for rejecting the historic conception of the Bible, are unduly magnified, and reasonable explanations of such difficulties peremptorily rejected. Such a partial method would be called partisan, if manifested in political discussion.

In the art of substituting mere assertions and conjectures for proof Canon Cheyne, in his Bampton lectures on the Psalms, takes a foremost place, though his friend Canon Driver is not far behind him. With Dr. Cheyne the assigning of the time of the writing of nearly all the Psalms to the period of the Maccabees is a hobby, that must be rode over everything which stands in its way. Nearly every song of triumph must be fitted to some victory of Simon or Judas and nothing else; though there may be fifty historic occasions that have equal, and even stronger claims to be the time that called forth these Psalms. Of Psalm ex., ascribed by our Lord to David, and held by such

Hebrew scholars as Delitzsch, Perowne and McLaren to be Davidic and Messianic, Canon Cheyne dogmatically, says: "It sets before us Simon as a king of righteousness, and as sitting at Jehovah's right hand on Mount Zion!" Such is his need of Maccabean Psalms for his theory, that he says: "If no Psalms probably Maccabean had been preserved, we should be compelled to presume that they once had existed."

Of Psalm cxviii., he confidently says: "The historic background is singularly definite," so he assigns it to Maccabean times, about 165 B.C. Yet, others have regarded the background so far from "singularly definite," that eminent scholars have differed widely as to its date. Ewald assigns it to the first year after the return from the Captivity; Hengstenberg to the time of laying the foundation of the second temple; Delitzsch to the completion of the temple; Stier and Perowne to the Feast of Tabernacles after the completion of the second temple—all of them over 300 years earlier than the date Cheyne assigns it with such oracular positiveness. He rejects King David, the Psalmist of Israel, when his theory requires it, and invents a new David in harmony with his critical theories. He says, "I feel bound to assume the existence of a David subsequently to the poet-king, to account for the character of the book of Amos." He has no difficulty with the expressed statement in 2 Samuel xxii. and 1st verse, that the 18th Psalm was spoken by David at a certain time mentioned. He knows better. He says it "was conjecturally ascribed to the idealized David not long before the Exile."

And we are further informed that "the author of Psalm xviii. thinks himself into the soul of David." It will be seen that he draws on his imagination for his facts. Questions of great importance in their bearing on the authority and truth of the Bible are settled by such expressions as, "we can hardly err in supposing;" "we may yet suppose," "can there be much doubt;" "who else can be meant but Simon?" "their post-Exile origin needs no proof;" "what more natural than that Simon should follow the example of David his prototype as described in the Chronicles, and make fresh regulations for the liturgical services of the sanctuary." The dates of Psalms and events fixed by this kind of guess-work, are made standards of comparison by which the age of other Psalms is settled. It would be easy to supply numerous examples of the use of this questionable method of proof by this learned leader of English higher critics.

Canon Cheyne is not singular in the use of this questionable method of proof. Dr. Driver also deals largely in such expressions as, "it seems probable," "it is not impossible," "it is quite possible," "it is very possible." One of his critics has said: "It has been contended that probability is the guide of life; Dr. Driver will contend that possibility is the stay of his critical existence." Though some regard him as safe and orthodox, it is truly said of him: "He believes thoroughly in the methods of the modern school of criticism, and accepts the most important of its results."¹

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October, 1892.

This is clearly shown by the readiness with which he denies the historicity of Deuteronomy, and accepts the late authorship of this book and of most of the Psalms, on very slight evidence. In spite of his moderate and hypothetical way of putting things, he makes the facts bend to the evolutionary theory of the Kuenen and Wellhausen school. In assigning Deuteronomy mainly to an unknown author who wrote it at a late date and ascribed it to Moses, Dr. Driver strangely argues that the book does not claim to be written by Moses, because it is written in the third person. And he seems to think it a sufficient justification of the supposed writer's falsification of history, that he had a good purpose, and "gave articulate expression to the thoughts and feelings which it was presumed the person in question (Moses) would have entertained!"

The prophecy of Joel makes clear reference to Mosaic laws found in the Pentateuch; so as we might expect, nearly all advanced critics of our day are in favor of assigning to that book a very late date. Dr. Driver naturally combats the date of the time of Jehoshaphat; but he passes over without notice the arguments in favor of its being written in the time of Uzziah, though this opinion, according to Meyrick in the "Speaker's Commentary," is supported by nineteen critics and commentators, including the names of Rosenmuller, Eichhorn, De Wette, Knobel, Hengstenberg, Davidson and other eminent scholars. Dr. Driver must have been aware that this view was strongly supported by these famous critics.

Prof. Robertson Smith, in his advocacy of a late date for this prophet, does not hesitate to appeal, among other things, to what is said of the locusts in Joel ii. 9: "They shall run upon the wall, they shall climb upon the houses, they shall enter in at the windows like a thief," as showing, in his opinion, a reference to the restoration of the city wall by Nehemiah. Just as if there was no other wall but that of the city. Evidently a great scholar may use a very weak argument.

Dr. Richard Valpy French cites a striking illustration of this practice of drawing large conclusions from slight premises. Prof. C. A. Briggs finds that it is sufficient to read the law of Numbers vi. to see that Samson was a very different kind of Nazarite from that contemplated in the "Priests' Code." Dr. French says: "What is his proof? He urges that Samson uses the jawbone of an ass as a weapon of destruction, in violation of the law of the Nazarite in the 'Priests' Code,' which forbids the Nazarite from coming into contact with a dead body. So then, the fact that Samson used the first thing that came to his hand, when suddenly called upon to defend his life, is the best argument he can adduce to prove that Samson not only disregarded Mosaic law, but was ignorant of it."²

Canon Gore, in "Lux Mundi," in a sort of apology for the writers who falsely ascribed their own productions to Moses, maintains that the Mosaic germ was developed by them, "*the whole result being con-*

²"Lex Mosaica," p. 160.

stantly attributed, probably unconsciously and certainly not from any intention to deceive, to the original founder." Again he says: "What we are asked to admit is, not conscious perversion, but *unconscious idealizing of history*, the reading back into past records of ritual development which was really later." Well does Bishop Blomfield say: "The idea of the 'Deuteronomist' unconsciously ascribing to Moses long discourses, which he had himself composed out of his own head, is to an ordinary mind unthinkable." Not only so. But this "unconscious idealizing of history" implies the deliberate recording as actual facts of events that, according to these critics, never took place, although they are seriously set down as the occasions of the deliverance of divine laws and authoritative moral precepts.

Wellhausen, who has done more than any other to make the current theory popular, and who is the great authority in that school of criticism, practices very largely this method of building important conclusions on very slender and fanciful foundations. Only a few examples can be given. In commenting on Genesis xi. 1-9, "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech," etc., he affirms that this passage "does not look back to the flood—the narrator knows nothing of the flood." The fact that the narrator does not here mention the flood gives no ground whatever for this assertion. The patriarch Abraham he regards as somewhat difficult to interpret. But he says: "That is not to say that, in such a connection as this, we may regard him as a historical person; he

might with more likelihood be regarded as a free creation of unconscious art." Reducing "the father of the faithful" and the historic progenitor of nations to "a free creation of unconscious art" is certainly a bold example of the free and easy method of dealing with Scripture. He declares the Tabernacle of the Congregation an invention of the author of the "Priests' Code," an imitation of Solomon's Temple; and then having rejected the account in the Pentateuch and the reference to it in Judges, assumes that in Judges "there is no mention of the Tabernacle; . . . it has disappeared."

He declares that Jeremiah is unacquainted with the Mosaic legislation, as it is contained in the "Priestly Code." The proof he gives of this is the words in chapter vii. 22: "I said nought to your fathers, . . . in the day when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices." Passing over the special meaning which he gives these words, it is enough to say that he himself supposes Jeremiah to be acquainted with Deuteronomy, for he alleges that "in the work of producing Deuteronomy he had taken an active part." But that book expressly enjoins burnt offerings and sacrifices (xii. 6). If Jeremiah's knowing Deuteronomy was not inconsistent with the words quoted in proof of his ignorance of sacrifices, how would his knowing Leviticus be inconsistent with such knowledge? As a proof of the late date of Genesis, Wellhausen says: "In Genesis xxvii. 40 allusion is made to the constantly repeated subjugations of Edom by Judah, alternating with

successful revolts on the part of the former."³ Where would it be supposed he got this information? He infers it from the words in the blessing of Jacob, "let thy mother's sons bow down to thee." He cannot admit that there is anything prophetic in the patriarch's words, and so he assumes that this must have been written after these historic events, and ascribed to Jacob as a prophetic blessing by the writer. This is certainly not very "scientific."³

A striking instance of this great critic's unfairness is mentioned by both Dr. Terry, of Evanston, and Dr. A. Stewart, of Aberdeen. Wellhausen had appealed to the statement in Chronicles, that Manasseh was carried captive to Babylon by the King of Assyria, as a proof of the falsity of the writer of Chronicles. But the cuneiform inscription of Esar-haddon, the king, explicitly states that Manasseh was his prisoner. Nevertheless, Wellhausen refuses to accept the correction which he cannot refute, and flippantly says: "In truth Manasseh's temporary deposition is entirely on the same plane with Nebuchadnezzar's temporary grass-eating."⁴ Dr. Terry says: "Pitiable is Wellhausen's attempt to disparage the bearing of the inscription on the question here at issue."

External evidence is not in favor with these critical leaders. Both Kuenen and Wellhausen give a particular account of the way in which the priestly school of Ezekiel produced the "Priests' Code," which they suppose to have been completed by Ezra, as if they

³ Page 464.

⁴ "Prologomena," p. 207.

were writing a veritable history of facts; though there is neither external nor internal evidence to support the conjectures, which they narrate as if they had witnessed what they describe. In fact, the ritualism of Ezekiel is quite different from the "Priests' Code," of which he is said to be the father or originator.

Professor Budde maintains that the early religious ideas of Israel were borrowed from the Kenites, and afterwards developed into the monotheistic religion, which has had so much influence in the world. But little or nothing is known of the history or religion of the Kenites. There is no historic accounts on which to base such a theory. That this fact is not regarded as standing in the way of accepting his notion is very significant. Why is there such readiness to ascribe the historic and religious ideas of the Israelites to heathen peoples, and to deny that other nations received any religious ideas from them? It looks like a disposition to overthrow the claim of Israel, to have received through their prophets supernatural revelations of divine truth not given to others.

It will be admitted that Dr. Driver expresses the creed of his school, which has now become "traditional," when he says: "The age and authorship of the books of the Old Testament can be determined (so far as this is possible) only upon the basis of the internal evidence supplied by the books themselves, by methods such as those followed in the present volume; no external evidence worthy of credit exists."⁵

⁵ Page xxxi.

This sweeping statement suggests two questions, viz: (1) Is it true that there is no historic evidence worth considering? (2) Are the methods of the higher critics, in dealing with the internal evidence of the contents of the books of the Bible, fair and scientific?

It is not true that there is no historic evidence. Although the term "historic criticism" is used to designate current rationalist theories about the Old Testament, there is good reason to say that "unhistoric criticism" would be a more suitable designation. The most revolutionary departures from the biblical conception of the Scriptures have no historic support whatever. Have we not stronger evidence of the Mosaic origin of the Hebrew laws contained in the Pentateuch, than of the genuineness of the works of Homer and Heroditus, or even of Thucydides? Are there any ancient writings in the world, to the contents of which such frequent and distinct reference is made in later writings? Is the direct and indirect testimony of Bible history and prophecy to be set aside at will? Does the universal belief of the Hebrew people, "the only people who for many centuries knew anything about the matter at all," offer no evidence worthy of credit? Is the testimony of Josephus and other learned Jewish writers to be ruled out of court, because it is not in favor of the plaintiffs? Are the explicit references in Ezra and Nehemiah to the Mosaic laws misleading fictions, that have no historic weight? Does the repeatedly expressed beliefs of our Lord and His Apostles, unquestioned by the whole

Christian Church till recent times, possess no historic value? In the book of Ecclesiasticus, written nearly 200 years B.C., there is a clear ascription of the 40th chapter of Isaiah to Isaiah the prophet. But this external evidence counts for nothing with the critics. Would not they deem it evidence worth something, if this writer had intimated that the latter part of this book was written by a prophet of the Exile? Well does ex-President Bartlett say: "The great weight of the historic traditions of a nation with an unbroken history of an unparalleled character, and the collateral tests, now rapidly accumulating from antiquarian researches, are too much overlooked and sometimes summarily set aside." Is it uncharitable to think, that Driver and his school disparage external evidence, not because there is none, but because all that exists is against them? And yet, so competent a judge as Prof. Fritz Hommel says: "*External evidence must be the banner under which all students of Old Testament literature are to range themselves in future.*" Certainly, the so-called "scientific" subjective study of the internal evidence has given us some extravagant and untenable theories, that should effectually discredit that kind of critical evidence.

As we have seen, the higher critics claim that they base their conclusions on the internal evidence, supplied by a careful study of the contents of the books of the Bible. Yet it seems to many competent judges, that a large part of the higher criticism consists of critical efforts to eliminate or explain away internal evidence, in the form of references to events or an

alleged condition of things, which stands in the way of their main assumptions. A good illustration of how not to accept internal evidence, when it does not agree with a theory, is shown in Cheyne's treatment of the 137th Psalm. This Psalm describes the feelings of the Israelites in Babylon. By any one not having a theory to maintain, it would be assigned to the time of the Exile. But this does not suit Dr. Cheyne. So drawing on his imagination, he assigns it to the time of Simon the Maccabee; and says that "just as the author of Psalm xviii. thinks himself into the soul of David, so a later temple-singer identifies himself by sympathy with his exiled predecessors in Babylon!" This is building hypothesis on hypothesis. The 23rd Psalm is another striking example. No circumstances could be a more suitable occasion for expressing the sentiments of this beautiful Psalm than those of King David fleeing from Absalom, when he and his followers were met at Mahanaim, and their wants supplied by Barzillai the Gileadite. David having been a shepherd would naturally suggest the figure of the Lord being his shepherd. He was indeed a wandering sheep. He had been walking in the shadow of danger and death. His life had been given back to him from imminent peril. In the presence of his enemies a table had been richly spread for him. The past goodness of God might well inspire the hope of restoration to Jerusalem, where he would again dwell in the house of the Lord. These are the very thoughts expressed in the Psalm. Well may an American critic ask: "Is it not violent to take this Psalm from

such a setting and such an author on the basis of mere conjecture, and without even the meagre compensation of finding for it elsewhere a local habitation and a name?" But the religious sentiments it contains, according to the critics, are too high for David; and so it must be assigned to some late unknown author, whose piety was equal to its production.

The treatment of the book of Deuteronomy is very much in point. The internal evidence of its Mosaic origin is clear and strong. There are references to life in the wilderness, to the anticipated settlement in Canaan, to the recent deliverance from Egypt, to what they were to do and not to do after they were settled in Canaan, and to the circumstances and occasions when certain laws were given. Even Kuenen says: "On the face of the whole legislation, of course, we read that the theatre is the desert; Israel is encamped there; the settlement in Canaan is in the future."⁶ With any fair treatment these facts would be taken as strong proof of the date and authorship of these writings. But on slight objections, which have been fairly answered, all this internal evidence has been thrown aside, evidently, because if it were accepted it would be an unanswerable proof of the early "Ethical Monotheism," which the critical dogmas of these critics compel them to regard as an evolution of much later times.

But the most objectionable of all these unjustifiable methods is the common practice of Wellhausen and his English and American followers, of rejecting texts

⁶ "Hexateuch," p. 25.

and discrediting at will, books which contradict their critical scheme, on the ground that they are interpolations, or fabrications of designing authors or redactors. The way in which this is done can neither be justified nor excused. These critics professedly come to the Bible to examine the evidence it presents respecting the time and manner in which its different books were produced. But it is only to the Old Testament, after they have arbitrarily altered and expurgated it to suit themselves, that they make their appeal. If space permitted, it would be easy to give illustrations of this indefensible practice. Professor Robertson, of Glasgow, speaking of this practice, says: "The passages which disturb a pet theory are declared to disturb the connection. We have, in fact, *no* contemporary reliable documents till the critic has adjusted them; and the theory ultimately is appealed to in confirmation of itself."⁷ Dr. R. P. French utters a similar indignant complaint. He says: "We may not take the documents as we find them, but in the form which the modern critical instinct regards as their genuine or proper form; that is to say, the form that best suits their hypothesis—all words, phrases and sections which contradict it having been carefully altered or eliminated."⁸

Dr. C. H. H. Wright, in his "Introduction to the Old Testament," remarks, "It is very convenient for scholars who defend the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis to seek to get rid of all, or many, of the references

⁷ Page 150.

⁸ "Lex Mosaica," p. 126.

found in the Prophets and other Scriptures to the incidents of early days, as later interpolations. There has been, indeed, on the part of these critics, too great a disposition to 'cook' the documents examined and to assume on mere hypothesis that words, sentences and paragraphs opposed to certain theories are [merely the insertions of later editors.]⁹ Even Professor Klosterman sharply rebukes the arbitrary character of this method, of "assuming errors and a disfiguration of the text, whenever without this they would get into a corner with their criticism of sources or their exegesis."¹⁰

Those who are not familiar with the writings of this school of critics may find it difficult to believe how generally and unjustifiably this mode of getting inconvenient passages out of the way is practised. I regret that my limits as to space will not permit me to give more than a few examples, though the supply is abundant. As the Pentateuch is the great battle-field, the efforts of these critics are, as we have seen, largely directed to criticisms of the references to Mosaic laws or events which appear in the later books, before the time to which the production of the chief parts of the Pentateuch have been assigned by them. Evidence of this kind, which cannot be explained away, must be eliminated on some pretext. In common with Wellhausen, though with less of positive and offensive dogmatism, Dr. Driver, in his "Introduction," assumes and insinuates so much that

⁹ Page 99.

¹⁰ "The Pentateuch," p. 61.

is adapted to destroy confidence in the truth and reliability of the historic books of the Old Testament, that it is easy for those who accept his conception of these books to go a step further, and reject any statements that are not in harmony with their critical creed. For example, an incident in the book of Judges, he says, "is pretty clearly a gloss, and so no real indication of the period to which the incident was assigned by the original narrator."¹¹ A sentence quoted from Judges, he says "from its character must certainly be pre-Exilic, and stamps the narratives of which it forms a part as pre-Exilic likewise." As if it were an important matter to find a sign that any portion of this book was written before the captivity. He freely charges the writer of this book with exaggerating the facts. He has no hesitation in denying the historicity of a passage, without taking the trouble to give the grounds of his denial. He says: "Korah is united with Dathan and Abiram, not in reality, but only in the narrative." Again: "It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the representation of P. ("Priests' Code") includes elements not in the ordinary sense of the terms historical."¹² As with his German masters, he finds an imaginary "redactor" a useful scapegoat in all emergencies. He speaks as if he had a personal acquaintance with a "redactor imbued with the spirit of Deuteronomy. His additions exhibit a phraseology and coloring different from that of the rest of the book."

What Driver suggests and insinuates, Wellhausen,

Cheyne and others confidently assert. Wellhausen tells us that "In Judges, Samuel, and Kings even, we are not presented with tradition purely in its original conditions, already it is overgrown with later accretions. . . . The whole area of tradition has finally been uniformly covered with an alluvial deposit."¹³

Robertson Smith, says: "The Chronicler assumes that this organization of the singers dated from David; but in reality it was quite modern."¹⁴ President Harper speaks of the imaginary "redactor" of Genesis in very depreciatory terms in *Hebraica*. He says: "His spirit is far from being a critical one. He did not hesitate to use his material in any way that would best subserve his aim. He inserted and omitted, changed and arranged. He handled his sources as freely as if he had been the author."

Though the unity, time, and genuineness of Hosea, Amos and Micah are beyond disproof, yet nearly every verse or passage in these prophets that makes any reference to the laws of Moses contained in the Pentateuch are questioned as later interpolations, or their natural meaning denied. This is done where there is no reason to think that the text is corrupt. In a note Wellhausen says of Hosea: "He even speaks with favor of David and the Kingdom of Judah; but I consider all such references in Hosea (as well as in Amos) to be interpolations. In i. 7. there is a reference to the deliverance of Jerusalem under Heze-

¹³ "Prologomena," p. 228.

¹⁴ "Old Testament, in the Jewish Church," p. 204.

kiah.”¹⁵ Hosea wrote before the time of Hezekiah; but in order to discredit the references which Hosea makes to the Pentateuch this gratuitous assertion is made. Dr. Cheyne, in a sermon on Elijah, says: “The story-tellers of Israel—at least those whose works have been preserved in the sacred canon—arranged and ornamented the wild growths of popular tradition in such a way as to promote sound morality and religion. . . . This is why [their works] are so true to nature, that persons who are devoid of a sense for literature often suppose them to be true to fact. True to fact! Who goes to the artist for hard dry facts?” This remarkable estimate of the Hebrew Scriptures is given in a volume entitled, “The Hallowing of Criticism,” as if this kind of criticism promoted faith and piety.

The books of Chronicles are historic compilations of admittedly late date. They are evidently intended to supplement the books of Kings, and to place the history in what the writer regards as a clearer relation to the over-ruling providence of God. Hence, greater prominence is given to the character of the Kings, and to their observance or neglect of the laws and religion of Israel, than in the books of Kings. The spirit of the writer is eminently devout and reverent. Very naturally there is frequent reference to the laws and ritual in the Pentateuch. If the truth of these records is admitted, the critical theory of the late development of the religion of Israel would be upset. So the whole artillery of the higher critics

is brought into play, to discredit and disparage the Chronicles as a partial and fraudulent work, written for the purpose of making it appear that laws and ordinances of late origin were of Mosaic times and authority. The most reckless and unscrupulous charges are made against the author of these books. The fact that Ezra is the reputed author does not cause either fairness or moderation in the criticism of these historical books by Wellhausen.

It is doubtful if ever any historian, secular or sacred, was as fraudulent and unscrupulous as the writer of the Chronicles is represented to have been. It has been pertinently said: "When he gives the same material as is found in the books of Kings, he is held in disrespect on the ground that he has copied without even verbal alteration or addition. When he adds anything in the Chronicles which is not found in the Kings, he is blamed and treated as a fabricator." I must refer my readers to the "Pulpit Commentary," to Professor Terry's essay in "Moses and his Recent Critics," and Dr. A. Stewart's essay in "Lex Mosaica," for replies to these assaults on the Chronicles.

Dr. Stewart classes under different heads characterizations of Wellhausen's treatment of Chronicles, as follows: (1) Expressions indicating disrespect towards the chronicler and his work; (2) Expressions indicating a charge of duplicity or dishonesty; (3) Contradictions and self-refutations; (4) Contempt for commentators who explain or harmonize the contradictions charged; (5) Sarcastic reflections on piety—especially piety and faith in the supernatural. I am

bound to say that this indictment is unanswerably sustained, by statements in Wellhausen's "Prologomena of the History of Israel." In that work he freely uses such expressions as these; "We have before us a deliberate, and in its motives a very transparent mutilation of the original narrative as preserved in the Book of Samuel." "The author of Chronicles was able to introduce them (Levites) only by distorting and mutilating his original, and landing himself in contradiction after all." "It is certain that quite as many (elements from tradition) have been simply invented." "It is indeed possible that occasionally a grain of good corn may occur among the chaff." It is hard to realize that it is the Hebrew Scriptures of which the chief German oracle is speaking so flip-pantly and bitterly. I need scarcely say, that it has been successfully shown by the authors named, that these partisan allegations cannot be justified; but we have not space to give these replies here.

When words, that have been declared to be the distinguishing marks of two different writers, occur where it is inconsistent with the scheme of the higher critics that they should appear, the difficulty is met by ascribing their insertion to some later writer or redactor. Nothing is more significant in the practice of the higher critics than the use they make of imaginary "redactors," or editors. Wherever anything occurs in the Hebrew documents that is not in harmony with their fundamental hypothesis, its authenticity must be denied. It is therefore laid upon the "redactor," who, it is assumed, was always on

hand at whatever time and place, are thought necessary to account for the insertion of anything which the critics find it desirable to eliminate or explain away.

The process adopted in making the "Polychrome Bible" is thus wittily described by Andrew Lang: "The method is simple and Teutonic. You have a theory, you accept the evidence of the sacred writers as far as it suits your theory, and when it does not suit, you say that the inconvenient passage is an interpolation. It must be, for if not what becomes of your theory? So you print the inconvenient passage in green, I suppose, or what not, and then the people know all about it."

The part which these critics allege was played by the "redactor" suggests some rather puzzling questions. Why is there just the number of redactors which the emergencies of each critic requires? "Cornill (1891) specifies not less than eighteen different writers and editors. Wellhausen wants twenty or more. Dillman, the strongest scholar of them all, sturdily rejects seven or eight of these imaginary personages. What mortal could surely discriminate the parts of twenty, twelve, or even six writers in one composition, fairly well combined?" (Bartlett.) Why is there no reference in the Hebrew Scriptures to the names or work of men who did so much? By what authority were such men allowed to corrupt the sacred writings of the Hebrews in the manner alleged? By what right do the higher critics claim the liberty of rejecting whatever is against their critical creed, while no

similar liberty is conceded to their opponents? It is very significant that no passages that can be construed to favor the view of the disintegrating critics are deemed an interpolation; and that every charge of interpolation made against the supposed "redactor" is made to get rid of facts that are against the assumptions of the advanced critical theorizers.

The Rev. W. E. Barton, in a review of Canon Driver's Introduction, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* of October, 1892, speaking of the higher critics says: "The method of the doctor in Mrs. Stowe's story, 'The Minister's Housekeeper,' is not unknown to them. 'He was great on texts the doctor was. When he had a p'int to prove he'd just go thro' the Bible and drive all the texts ahead o' him, like a flock o' sheep; and then, if there was a text that seemed agin him, why, he'd come out with his Greek and Hebrew, and kind o' chase 'round a spell, jest as ye see a fellar chase a contrary bell-wether, and make him jump the fence arter the rest. I tell ye there wern't no text in the Bible that could stand agin the Doctor when his blood was up.'"

Criticism, in the sense of thorough Biblical study, is all right and proper; it is in the *practice* of some of the high priests of the new criticism that the unjustifiable methods are seen. There are two conclusions which the examination of such critical methods as these is adapted to impress on the minds of all impartial students: (1) That it cannot be a sound and true theory of the Bible which requires such modes of proof. (2) That the teachers, who use these

questionable methods of advocating their views, cannot be safe guides for Christian people, who desire to retain faith in the truth and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the power as well as the form of godliness.

In view of such facts as those we have cited, little weight is due to Dr. Driver's dogmatic assertion—"The main conclusions of critics with reference to the authorship of the books of the Old Testament rest upon reasonings, the cogency of which cannot be denied, without denying the ordinary principles by which history is judged and evidence estimated." Most readers will agree with Bishop Blomfield, who says, "On the contrary, it is because these conclusions flagrantly contradict those principles that they are called in question."¹⁶

No reputation for scholarship, piety and ability can confer the right to use such methods of maintaining a cause, as those we have pointed out in the preceding pages.

In setting forth these questionable methods I have given facts, not merely my opinion. Let no one be misled by the plea, that the objections to these current critical methods of dealing with the Old Testament are the product of the prejudices of "traditionalists" who are incapable of appreciating the arguments of "scholars." Similar views of these methods are held and vindicated by distinguished scholars, who have spent their lives in the study of Hebrew and other

¹⁶ "The Old Testament and the New Criticism," page 115.

Oriental languages and literatures. A few illustrations will suffice.

Prof. Matthew Leitch, of Belfast, in an article in the *Treasury Magazine*, gives some suggestive rules, based on these critical methods, the practical adoption of which secures unity in the main among the higher critics. One of these rules is as follows: "If a passage contain a prophecy, assign it to a writer who lived after the event prophesied; if a miracle, bring it down to a date so long after the event, that no credibility can be attached to the narrative." It is probable this rule would not be acknowledged by the critics, but it is faithfully observed and practised in their work.

Prof. James Robertson, speaking of these processes, says: "The literary task of critical writers, therefore, is not so much to discover and account for facts of a history long past, as to account for the accounts which later writers give of them. The history which Wellhausen constructs is, in fact, a history of the tradition; and in many cases it seems a laborious endeavor to show how something very definite grew out of nothing very appreciable. The further one follows the processes, the more apparent it becomes that the endeavor is not so much to find out by fair interpretation what the writer says, as to discover his (supposed) motive for saying it, or what he wishes to conceal. . . . Wellhausen and his school first find an idea, and then seek by main force to read it into the unwilling documents. In this way a history is no

doubt constructed; but the supporting beams are subjective prepossessions, and the materials are only got by discrediting the sources from which they are drawn."¹⁷

Prof. Howard Osgood, a distinguished member of the Old Testament Revision Committee, says: "So far from being strictly historical, this method is the canonization of conjecture."¹⁸

Professor Sayce, of Oxford, the learned Orientalist and archæologist, characterizes the methods of these higher critics as follows: "Baseless assumptions have been placed on a level with ascertained facts, hasty conclusions have been put forward as principles of science, and we have been called upon to accept the prepossessions and fancies of the individual critic as the revelation of a new gospel. If the archæologist ventured to suggest that the facts he had discovered did not support the views of the critic, he was told he was no philologist. The opinion of a modern German theologian was worth more, at all events in the eyes of his 'school,' than the most positive testimony of the monuments of antiquity. . . . There are popes in the 'higher criticism' as well as in theology."¹⁹

Prof. Herman Strack, of Berlin, says: "The writings of the Old Testament are violently treated, both from a critical and exegetical point of view, in order to serve the new theory of Hebrew history."²⁰

¹⁷ "Early Religion of Israel," p. 467.

¹⁸ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1893, p. 464.

¹⁹ "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," p. 5.

²⁰ "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia," p. 1794.

Prof. W. H. Green, of Princeton, who was chairman of the American Revision Committee of the Old Testament, says : " If new meanings may be imposed upon paragraphs or sentences incompatible with their present context ; if variance may be created by expunging explanatory or harmonizing clauses ; if discrepancy may be inferred from a silence which is itself produced by first removing the very statements that are desiderated from the connection ; if what are narrated as distinct events may be converted into irreconcilable accounts of the same transaction, the most closely connected composition can be rent into discordant fragments. Such methods are subversive of all just interpretation."²¹

Professor Schodde, of Columbus University, Ohio, in an article in the *Treasury Magazine*, says : " The arrogant claim that the advanced or radical biblical criticism of the day is ' scientific ' is entirely without ground or basis ; on the contrary, in more than one particular, it grossly violates the cardinal principle of scientific research. For instance, to mention no other point, the literary canon that the Old Testament books or parts of books are the results of the developments which their contents describe, and in no way the sources and causes of such a development, is a gratuitous assumption and admits of no plausible demonstration, being also a direct contradiction of what is observed in other literatures." These remarks do not refer merely to extreme Rationalists. They apply to the disciples as well as to the masters. Yet

some college professors who indignantly deny being rationalist or heterodox, accept the critics who practise these methods as their leaders and guides in the study of the Old Testament.

There is no way of evading the significance and force of such testimonies, based upon incontrovertible facts, except by ignoring relevant facts, and denying that there is any value or weight in the critical judgment of any one, no matter how able, honest, and learned he may be, who does not accept the methods and theories of the evolutionary critics.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTRADICTORY DIFFERENCES OF PROMINENT HIGHER CRITICS.

The Contradictory Differences not Insignificant—Examples of Wide Differences as to Dates—Differences Relate to the Same Kind of Questions which Constitute the Main Elements of Higher Criticism—Reasons for Distrust.

THE contradictory opinions of prominent higher critics who are learned in all the critical wisdom of Germany, and profess to use the most scientific methods of study, have a more direct bearing on the value and truth of the theories and inferences of this school of criticism than is generally recognized. These differences are not the insignificant things that certain critics would have us believe. A few examples, illustrating these contradictory differences of critical judgment, will show that this is the case. Without taking into consideration the objections of eminent Hebrew scholars, who reject the evolutionary hypothesis, the differences among the "higher critics" themselves are significant and important. They show that the common idea that there is a definite result of modern criticism, which all scholars accept, is not justified by the facts.

Kuenen denies that the code of Deuteronomy takes

cognizance of any preceding one, though Wellhausen and most of his followers hold the contrary opinion. Dillmann and Noldeke assign the "Priests' Code" to 800 B.C., while most of the advanced critics assign it to post-Exilic times. Dr. Klosterman, the veteran professor of Old Testament Exegesis in the University of Keil, whom no one can accuse of undue conservatism, in his treatise on "The Pentateuch," says, that a distinguished historian said to him: "If Wellhausen is right, I renounce all respect for the entire fraternity of Old Testament scholars; for what they regarded as established truth and declared to be such, to us outsiders proved to be the opposite of the truth on the first serious attack."

Professors Cheyne and Driver are generally regarded as leaders in the English school of analytic critics. Yet Cheyne wrote several articles in the *Expositor*, reviewing Driver's "Introduction," in which he charged his fellow-professor with failing to carry out his principles to their logical results, in order to conciliate conservative theologians.

A number of prominent scholars place the date of Joel's prophecy in the time of Uzziah. Orelli, following Credner, places it in the time of Jehoash. Winer, Ewald, Hitzig, Kleinert, Hofmann, Delitzsch, Keil, Wunsch, Steiner and Kirkpatrick, all place it at or near the same date. Bleek and Hengstenberg, place it a little later. But Hilgenfield, Vatke, Seinecke, Duhm, as well as Wellhausen and his English followers, in whose critical creed late dates for the books of the Bible is a prime article, contend for a

late post-Exilic origin.¹ Graf divided the "Grund-schrift," or foundation document, into two parts. He maintained that the narrative part belonged to the ancient pre-Jehovistic writing, and that the legislative portion was as late as the Exile. But Kuenen maintained, with greater reason, that "the two are dominated by essentially the same conception, and resemble each other so closely that they cannot possibly be severed by a period of three or four centuries." Graf finally accepted the view of Kuenen, and gave up what he had previously regarded as a foundation principle.

At one time, the hypothesis that Deuteronomy was the latest part of the Pentateuch was dominant. This view was upheld by such eminent critics as Tuch, Bleek, Knobel and others. Now the popular theory of the hour is, that Deuteronomy was written nearly 200 years before the "Priests' Code," which the advanced critics declare to be post-Exilic. But Schrader assigns the "Priests' Code" to the time of David; and Dillmann strongly combats the late date contended for by Kuenen, Wellhausen and their disciples. The process of conjectural disintegration has been carried to such an extent that one can hardly find two "higher" critics who agree as to what parts of "the Book of the Prophet Isaiah" were written by "Isaiah of Jerusalem."

Canon Driver himself says: "On the relative date of E and J the opinions of critics differ. Dillmann, Kittel and Riehm assign the priority to E, placing him

¹ See Orelli's "Minor Prophets."

900-850 B.C. and J 750, (Dillmann) 830-800 (Kittel), or 750 (Riehm). Wellhausen, Kuenen and Stade, on the other hand, assign the priority to J, placing him 850-800 B.C., and E 750."² Even one so strongly in sympathy with the theories of the higher criticism as Prof. A. B. Bruce, says: "Not to mention endless diversity of view on special points, there are broad contrasts between different schools, even with reference to the leading critical problems."³

It is significant that nothing in the language or style offers any hindrance to the critics changing the dates of books a few hundred years from what was formerly held, such as placing the date of the "Priests' Code" later than the book of Deuteronomy, which was formerly held to be much the later of the two.

Prof. A. B. Davidson, of Edinburgh, is an eminent and liberal biblical scholar. Yet, in a review of Professor Duhm's Isaiah, he says: "The grounds on which passages are denied to be Isaiah's, and ascribed to another hand, or relegated to a later age, will have to be examined in each particular case. While in some cases these grounds are to be found in the methods and idiosyncrasies of this particular commentator, in most cases they will be found in the critical and historical axioms with which the author has approached his task."⁴

Even Kuenen and Wellhausen do not always agree. Speaking of Deuteronomy, Kuenen says: "The objections to the unity of authorship which have been

²"Introduction," p. 116. ³"Apologetics," p. 171.

⁴*Critical Review*, Jan. 1893.

urged by Wellhausen and Valeton are not convincing." About the prophecy of Zechariah there are three theories and three distinct groups of critics. By one group chapters ix.-xiv. are assigned to a pre-Exilic date; by another set of authors these chapters are assigned a later date than the earlier ones; by another group of scholars the unity of the book is strongly maintained. Each of these theories is advocated by a number of distinguished scholars. The view of Bishop Newton that chapters ix.-xi. were written before the fall of the kingdom of Israel, and chapters xii.-xiv. in the time of Jeremiah, has also been widely held.⁵

Prof. Howard Osgood says: "The contradictions between Driver and Cornill on the present initial point of this criticism cover more than one-third of the book. Their contradictions on Isaiah are equally great. These contradictions refer to the grounds for, as well as to the assignments of parts to authors and dates. And when we pass on and compare these differences with those of Wellhausen, Kuenen, Dillmann, Cheyne, Duhm, etc., we obtain a maze of contradictory statements, by equally learned men, that is bewildering." It has been well said by the same writer: "The fact that one critic finds an analysis self-evident does not seem to render it impossible for the next one to hesitate even to pronounce it composite, much less to assert that its analysis is beyond dispute."

Even among those who accept the theory of several

⁵See Orelli's "Minor Prophets."

foundation documents, Professor Strack says: "This view is held in forms differing very considerably; the differences concerning the order of succession and age of the documents, rather than their classification," We need not remind our readers that "the order of succession and age of the documents" are main questions in these modern critical speculations.

The following remarks of such a liberal critic as Dr. A. B. Davidson, in a review of Lohr's book on the "Lamentations," are very suggestive. He says: "The diversity of opinion among modern scholars regarding the authorship of the various chapters is extraordinary, and nothing shews better the helplessness of criticism when it has to rely on internal evidence alone. Of chapter iii., Steinthal remarks that 'it forms the moral climax of the whole,' while of the same chapter, Noldeke says: 'It has least value, and must in any case be assigned to a distinct poet.' 'That the writer of chapter ii., iv.,' says Thenius. 'cannot have written chapters i., iii. and v., it needs only a very moderate share of æsthetic feeling to perceive;' while Budde says: 'I see no ground for denying that the author of chapters ii., iv., wrote chapter i.' Stade and Budde agree that the author of chapters i., ii., iv., cannot have written chapter iii., but neither sees any ground for depriving him of the authorship of chapter v., while Lohr attributes chapters ii., iii., iv., to one author, but considers it impossible that he can have written chapters i., v., the former chapter being wanting in clearness and the latter in contents. . . . Perhaps Reuss is not far

wrong, when he finds in the attempts of scholars to distribute the five chapters among different writers nothing but 'a prodigal waste of ingenuity.'"⁶

There are a great many cases to which Reuss's phrase, a "prodigal waste of ingenuity," will apply. With some of the German critics this practice of dissection and disintegration, based on internal evidence alone, has been carried to an irrational extreme. Internal evidence of style and thought may be studied with advantage; but in many cases it yields no sure light. The authors of the "Polychrome Bible," in which the conjectured writers of the original documents are indicated by different colors, assure us that this Bible will "show at a glance whether the received text is unquestionably correct, whether the passage is original or a subsequent addition." "And this," as Prof. J. D. Davis says, "in the face of the fact that Haupt, Siegfried, Wellhausen and Cheyne differ greatly in their conclusions from critics of equal prominence." But such a fact does not prevent dogmatic positiveness. It was certainly a shrewd policy for the "redactors" of the "Polychrome" to assign each book to one author. There is a strong probability that no two critics would have agreed as to the documentary "sources" of any book. Those who have seen the new production, or even Bissell's reprint in English of Kautzsch and Socin's "Genesis in Colors," are likely to be of the opinion, that the "Polychrome Bible" will do more to show the absurdity than the scientific certainty of the speculations about imaginary authors of Old Testament books.

⁶*Critical Review*, Jan. 1894.

When these contradictory conclusions of higher critics are cited, as a reason for distrusting the critical methods that produce such conflicting results, the common reply is that the differences are about minor points; but that there is a general consensus of opinion among scholars on the main conclusions of the analytic critics. Professor Herman Strack, who in Germany is counted conservative, says: "The differences of opinion among the critics, upon which Keil lays stress, are after all not so great in fundamentals; all agreeing (Wellhausen, Delitzsch, etc.) upon the necessity of distinguishing the different sources and agreeing, to a greater or less extent, in the classification of the sections."

The reason of this unity among "higher" critics, on the main points, is obvious enough. All who have adopted as true the idea that the Scriptures are a product of evolution, and who consequently feel bound to minify or ignore supernatural divine interposition in the origin of the Scriptures, will naturally be united in opposition to any conception of the Bible which contradicts their fundamental assumption; though they may differ as to the mode by which they explain away whatever is not in harmony with their scheme. A number of persons might unite in the pulling down of a building, and yet differ widely as to what should be put in its place.

BUT THESE DIFFERENCES OF HIGHER CRITICS DERIVE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE FROM THE FACT THAT THEY RELATE TO THE SAME KIND OF QUESTIONS, AND ARE ACCEPTED ON THE SAME KIND OF EVIDENCE, WHICH CON-

STITUTES THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM. Whether the dates can be determined from the internal evidence is an essential question, on which the main critical conclusions depend. Opinions respecting the evidence which the books present as to their dates and authors constitute the great bulk of the higher criticism. The evidence on the points about which the critics differ is similar in kind to that used in support of the inferences on which they agree. The evidence in these cases can hardly be clear and conclusive, or it would not be rejected by any able and independent Hebrew scholar. To say the least, the proof is in most cases of such a peculiar kind, and depends so largely on the mental idiosyncrasy and theological standpoint of the critic, that hasty acceptance or positive dogmatism is alike unjustifiable. These differences of the critics go a long way towards showing that, in many cases, Biblical scholars have undertaken to decide questions which can never be definitely settled, because of the want of the necessary reliable data.

It is not, however, true that the points about which critics differ are all of minor importance. If the "Priests' Code" is not the late invention which the higher critics allege; if the book of Deuteronomy is what, on the face of it, it assumes to be; if the variety of unknown authors and late dates, assumed by the higher critics, is not justified by proper evidence, but mainly rests on inconclusive conjectures—this largely overthrows the whole scheme of the critics.

There is truth and pertinence in the remark of

Professor C. W. E. Body: "These theories of literary analysis, these methods of determining the dates of ancient documents by mutual comparison, depend for the most part upon the convergent force of a number of minute points, to which the minds of different men will assign very unequal value. Thus even with the trained perception of great scholars, the very same phenomena will lead them at one time unhesitatingly to one conclusion, and will be held at another to indicate precisely the opposite."⁷ The fact that such wide differences exist among higher critics shows how unjustifiable it is to speak of what modern criticism has shown, as if there was perfect unity of opinion on critical questions, and the term represented a definite established result. It also shows that it is better for Christian people to wait for convincing proof, than to trust the *ipse dixit* of theorists.

The way in which many of those who assume to be leaders in modern Biblical criticism have given up opinions, which they once held with great positiveness, is not adapted to inspire confidence; but on the contrary teaches a lesson of caution. When we know that a biblical critic was once just as confident of the truth of some theory he has renounced, as he now is of the truth of the view he has substituted for it, this can hardly fail to shake our confidence in the critic and his methods. In the edition of his "Introduction to the Old Testament," published at Leyden in 1863, Dr. Kuenen gave the date of the prophecy of Joel as about 860 B.C. But as this book contains references

⁶ "The Permanent Value of Genesis," p. 5.

to the Pentateuch, which do not harmonize with the development theory, in the edition published in 1889, he says Joel was written after 400 B.C. Cheyne, Driver, Briggs, Sanday, and several others, furnish striking examples of drifting and change of views, which make one feel that they are not safe leaders. In the forcible words of Bishop Blomfield, "We may well ask what confidence we can be expected to feel in a system of interpretation which, scarcely yet fifty years old, has already gone through such serious modifications? or why we should be expected to regard as final, conclusions which their own advocates admit to be still in a state of change and fluxion?"

CHAPTER IX.

THE BEARING OF CURRENT THEORIES ON OUR LORD'S TEACHING AND CHARACTER.

Christ's Testimony to the Old Testament—New Testament Conception of Messianic Prediction and Fulfilment—Our Lord's Citation of the 110th Psalm—Three Theories Examined—The Modern "Kenosis" Discrowns Christ—His Teaching Not Disproved—Making Room for Rationalist Theories.

THE effect of the acceptance of the theories of the higher critics, on faith in the unerring teaching and divine character of our Lord Jesus Christ, is of grave significance. In dealing with this phase of the question, we must avoid building upon our Lord's references to the Old Testament Scriptures broader conclusions than a fair interpretation of their meaning justifies. Universal inferences should not be drawn from particular references. But without any straining of the import of these references, it may be confidently affirmed that our Lord's recognition of the Divine authority of the Law and the Prophets, His citation of passages as conclusive on the points to which they refer, and the conception of Messianic prophecy and fulfilment, prominent in His teaching

and throughout the New Testament, do not agree with the theories of the evolutionary critics, concerning the origin and character of the books of the Old Testament. It is beyond question that the view of the Old Testament, which the higher critics declare to be quite erroneous, was universally accepted by the Jews of our Lord's day, and, far from condemning it as false, He assumed its truth in His teaching.

Even writers who repudiate the charge of being Rationalists and claim to be evangelical, have adopted views which compel them to deny that there are predictions of the historic Jesus Christ in the Old Testament prophecies. Professor Ladd, of Yale College, says: "We have reason to doubt whether prophetic inspirations ever results in the clear and definite knowledge of some single occurrence which is to take place in the future." Prof. Robertson Smith says: "There is no reason to think that a prophet ever received a revelation which was not spoken directly and pointedly to his own time." Dr. G. C. Workman, to whom I have fully replied in my "Jesus the Messiah in Prophecy and Fulfilment," says: "None of the numerous Messianic passages in the Old Testament refer directly or originally to the historic Christ, but appear in the New Testament merely as quoted by Him, or as applied to Him."¹ He also denies that the 53rd of Isaiah refers to the Messiah. No wonder that Prof. Franz Delitzsch, in his last book, says: "It is a depressing observation that Judaism has strong support in modern Christian theology, and that its

¹ "Lecture," p. 448.

literature is like an arsenal out of which Judaism can secure weapons for an attack on Christianity."²

But the explicit utterances of the Lord Jesus Christ directly contradict these denials of predictive references to Himself, and of fulfilment by His Incarnation, life and death. He said, "For if ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, *for He wrote of Me.*" (John v. 46.) "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures, *the things concerning Himself.*" (Luke xxiv. 27.) "These are my words, which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, *which are written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Me.*" (Luke xxiv. 44.) It is utterly unwarranted to call these declarations mere "applications" to Himself of things that had been spoken of some one else by the prophets. In the words of the learned Bishop Ellicott: "Our Lord distinctly recognized the inspiration of the prophets of the Old Testament, and the predictive contents of their writings, and especially their pervasive references to Himself, His work, His sufferings, and His exaltation."³ When, speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures, He says, "*They are they which testify of Me,*" it would be absurd to say that He was merely applying to Himself things spoken of others.

St. Peter explicitly affirms the same truth as his Lord and Master when, speaking of the prophets, he emphasizes the fact, that the Spirit of Christ which

² "Messianic Prophecies," p. 6.

³ "Christus Comprobator," p. 168.

was in them "*testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them.*" (1 Peter i. 11.)

St. Paul says: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures.*" (1 Cor. xv. 3.) St. John says: "These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory *and he spake of Him.*" (John xii. 41.)

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the great argument of the founders of the Christian Church, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, was the correspondence between the prophetic predictions and the work and sufferings of Jesus. He fulfilled "what the prophets and Moses did say should come." The irreconcilable contradiction between the words of our Lord and the holy Apostles and the denial of predictions of the historic Jesus Christ, which has of late been advocated as consistent with the orthodox Christian faith, can neither be disproved nor explained away by substituting mere "applications" of prophecy to events that were never predicted, and spiritual realization for actual fulfilment in the New Testament sense. If our Lord is right, this negative theory of prophecy and fulfilment is wrong.

The baseless notion that the New Testament conception of prophecy and fulfilment is, that there is no original predictive reference to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, and that the fulfilments, spoken of by our Lord and the Apostles, are merely "accommodated applications" to Him of things that were not spoken

of Him at all, is too utterly at variance with the plain teaching of the New Testament to require refutation or deserve serious consideration.

The Redeemer repeatedly refers to events and statements, recorded in the Pentateuch and other books of the Old Testament, as veritable historic facts, in words that cannot be harmonized with the disintegrations of the higher critics. On several occasions He speaks of Moses in a way that plainly means the historic man of God, who said and did the words and acts explicitly ascribed to him in the Pentateuch. Our Lord asked the Saducees, "Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'" (Mark xii. 26.) He also asked: "Did not Moses give you the law?" (John vii. 19.) When asked a question about divorce, He said: "What did Moses command you?" (Mark x. 3)—referring directly to the law in Deuteronomy xxiv., a book which the critics ascribe to an unknown author, who, it is alleged, wrote it hundreds of years after the time of Moses. In these words, and when He says: "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away one jot or tittle shall in no way pass away from the law till all things shall be accomplished," it is impossible for any unbiased Christian to believe that in this solemn declaration our Lord was speaking of writings that were a Mosaic of fragments, written by unknown authors, who ascribed them to Moses.

One of the most striking of our Lord's references to the Old Testament is His citation from the 110th

Psalm, in which He assumes that in this psalm David speaks of Himself. In propounding the question, How Christ could be the son of David and his Lord, He said: "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." (Mark xii. 36.) This is recorded by three evangelists.

Three things are plainly assumed here: (1) That King David was the author of these words; (2) that he wrote them by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; (3) that they contain a distinct prophetic reference to the Christ. To deny this is to take all the point and relevant meaning out of our Lord's question and argument. As Dr. Maclaren, of Manchester, says: "Our Lord's argument is not drawn from the 'august language' of the psalm, but from David's relationship to the Messiah, and crumbles to pieces if he is not the singer."⁴

But those who have adopted as their critical creed the late dates of the Psalms, are bound on some pretext or other to deny the Davidic authorship of this Psalm. The Rev. G. C. Workman, following the advanced critics, declares that this Psalm "contains no direct reference to Christ," and that "its author was not David, but a poet belonging to his time." As if the explicit words of Christ may be thrust aside at will, when they stand in the way of the theory of certain modern critics.

No elaborate proof is needed to show that even some of those who claim to be orthodox and evan-

⁴ "The Psalms," Vol. III., p. 184.

gelical scholars, on this subject appear to reject the authority of Him who spake as never man spake, as an infallible Teacher of truth. Our Lord's conception of the Old Testament does not accord with their evolutionary theories, therefore something has to be done to eliminate or explain away the force of His words, and make room for their critical speculations. Some writers, like Kuenen, frankly repudiate the New Testament interpretation. Even where this is not openly done, the line of argument adopted shows plainly enough that these critics are against Christ's conception of the Old Testament and reject it, because it is against their critical conclusions.

In setting aside the words of the Redeemer relating to the Old Testament, when they express thoughts which do not accord with certain modern theories, three lines of argument have been used, which we will briefly examine.

1. It is said that it was not the purpose of the Saviour's teaching to deal with literary or scientific problems. This is freely admitted. But it does not follow that what He said was not true and trustworthy, when he expounded and applied the Hebrew Scriptures. Neither did our Lord formulate a system of theology. Nevertheless, He enunciated great truths which shed light on the deep questions of theology. When He said, "David himself said by the Holy Ghost the Lord said unto my Lord," etc. He is not dealing with a question of literary criticism. He is expounding a prophetic declaration of His eternal priesthood, which is fully treated in the

epistle to the Hebrews. That the Christ was David's Lord, yet the son of David, was not a mere puzzle to confound the Pharisees, but the unfolding of a mysterious truth which was not understood till the Great Teacher illustrated it in His own person. Calling this a literary question, as if that would exclude it from the sphere of Christ's teaching, is a weak device. The real question at issue is: Were the statements of Jesus, conveying thoughts assumed to be truths by Him, true and worthy of confidence, and of authority in deciding the matters to which they relate? The notion that He may be trusted in regard to some things, but not in others, is doubtful and dangerous. If the belief and teaching of the Saviour on one subject may be rejected on such grounds, the way is opened to reject His teaching on other subjects, when it does not agree with modern critical views; and thus His authority as an infallible Teacher would be undermined, if not positively rejected. To those who make an unwarranted distinction between the province of spiritual truths, in which Jesus is admitted to be an infallible Teacher, and Old Testament history and exposition, regarding which they deem His teaching unreliable or erroneous, our Saviour's words to Nicodemus might fitly be addressed: "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John iii. 12).

2. Some theologians hold that our Lord knew the alleged facts relating to the authorship of the books of the Old Testament, as now held by the critics, but

that in teaching He adopted the popular belief, as He did that of the sun's rising and setting, and spoke as if the prevalent ideas on this subject were true. This theory is seriously objectionable. So far from Christ conforming His teachings to prevailing erroneous beliefs, He constantly condemned and rejected them. The Saviour's reply to those who charged Him with casting out devils by Beelzebub, has been cited as an alleged example of His taking a false popular view as if it were true. There is no parallel between this case and His references to the Old Testament. No reader can get the impression that Jesus admitted He cast out devils by Beelzebub. The question, however, is: Did Christ adopt such a misleading practice in this use and application of the words of the 110th Psalm?

To suppose that the Son of God knew that David was not the author of this Psalm, and that it did not refer to the Messiah, and yet that He solemnly declared what meant the very contrary, and based an argument upon what He knew to be a false meaning, is a conclusion from which we recoil, as inconsistent with all our conceptions of the character of our Lord and Saviour. Bishop Ellicott forcibly says: "We unhesitatingly deny that the Lord's general teaching as to the Old Testament, and those characteristics of His teaching on the subject which all reasonable interpreters would be willing to recognize, could by any possibility be attributed to any principle of accommodation in the ordinary sense of the word. That He who was the Truth and the Light, as well as the Way,

could have so taught in reference to God's Holy Word, out of deference to the ignorance or the prejudices of His hearers, is utterly inconceivable."⁵ That any "Christian scholar" should adopt such an hypothesis, shows in what emergencies a preconceived theory may place its adherents.

3. The chief method of justifying the setting aside of the Redeemer's testimony to the Old Testament, in this reference to the 110th Psalm and to other parts of its contents, is by the adoption of such a view of the "Kenosis" or voluntary ignorance of Christ, as the critical theory requires. This is mainly based on the single passage in which our Lord appears to disavow a knowledge of the time of the end of the world. We do not deny that some who reject the Davidic authorship of this Psalm hold fast the idea that Christ is an infallible teacher. Yet, as Dr. McLaren says: "To maintain that in so important a crisis He based His argument on an error comes perilously near to imputing fallibility to Him as our Teacher."⁶

Canon Gore and others, however, cite all the places in the Gospels, in which it is intimated that our Lord expressed surprise, or appeared to ask questions for information, as evidence that he was ignorant of many things, and knew no more about the Old Testament than what was known to the Scribes and Pharisees of His day. Driver and Sanday take the same view. The adoption of this line of argument is a significant confession. If the results of higher

⁵ "Christus Comprobator," p. 118.

⁶ "The Psalms," Vol. III., p. 184.

criticism had not been contrary to "the mind of the Master," it would not have been necessary to adopt this hypothesis, as a means of discrediting His testimony to the truth and authority of the Law and the Prophets, in order to leave the way clear for the scheme of modern criticism.

The great objection to this hypothesis of the "Kenosis," as expounded by recent critics is, that it implies a character of Christ widely different from what is clearly set forth in the Gospels, taught by the Apostles, and held by the Christian Church in all ages. He was "the Light of the World," "God manifest in the flesh," "the Way, the Truth and the Life." He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." (John ii. 24.) He knew the past life of the Samaritan woman, whom He met at the well. Peter's intimate knowledge of His words and works gave him confidence to say, "Lord Thou knowest all things." It is of this Divine Teacher full of "grace and truth" who "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," and on whose infallible words the saints of the ages have trusted for salvation, that it is assumed He knew nothing of Old Testament prophecy and fulfilment, but what he learned in common with sinful mortals around Him.

One is almost forced to think that sincere and scholarly men, like Sanday, Driver and Gore, whose critical theories have driven them to adopt this hypothesis of Christ's ignorance, for some cause do not fairly realize the degree in which this dogma of

the "Kenosis," as explained by them, tends to rob the Son of God of the exalted character which attests His claim to the full confidence of His people, as an infallible Teacher and All-sufficient Saviour. Most Christians must feel that the Saviour, which these critics leave us, is not the Saviour in whom they have trusted, and in the undoubted truth of whose words they can rely in life or death.

The late Canon Liddon, after quoting Hooker's "Exposition of the Union of the Divine and Human Natures in Christ," pertinently remarks: "It is in accordance with this principle that the Church has hitherto believed Him to be an infallible Teacher, and especially when He is touching on matters which, like the Old Testament Scriptures, directly concern God's revelation of Himself to man. To say that He shows no signs of transcending the historical knowledge of His age, is to imply that He shared with the rabbis around Him grave errors respecting the real worth of the Old Testament literature, and that He was in this respect inferior to modern scholars who take the negative side in questions of Old Testament criticism. To assert that, while thus imperfectly informed, He used and sanctioned the Old Testament as He did, is to go farther; it is to imply that, as a teacher of religion, He was a teacher of error."⁷

It is a curious reason for protesting against appealing to our Lord's deliverances respecting the Old Testament, that "the use of such proofs removes the whole question from the historical and critical

⁷"Sermon on Romans xv. 3, 4."

domain." If the truth of His testimony cannot be disproved, its value and force cannot be denied or discarded for any such reason. There are many critical questions not touched or settled by our Lord's testimony, which afford the critics a wide field for the exercise of their powers of thought and research.

We have not referred to the bearing of the theories about the Bible on the truth of Christ's teaching and His character, with any thought of excluding critical enquiry. But it will be time enough to invent lowering views of Christ's knowledge, when the truth of His words has been fairly disproved by adequate evidence. This has never yet been done.

The Davidic authorship and Messianic character of the 110th Psalm, against which some critics have battled so persistently, and which has largely been the occasion of developing this theory of the "Kenosis," cannot be disproved. It was not questioned by the learned men of the Jewish Church of our Lord's time. They were more likely to know the date and authorship of this Psalm than critics of another race and language over 1800 years later. It has been rightly said, had it been an error to ascribe this Psalm to David, there must have been scribes there able and willing to point out the error.

It is indeed said, that Jesus did not assert that the Psalm was written by David. But the fact of the Davidic authorship being assumed by Him as an unquestioned truth that was universally believed, strengthens rather than weakens the evidence of our Lord's words. No good reason has been given for

denying the truth of his references to this Psalm. Modern critics have not proved that Christ was in error in ascribing this Psalm to David. That prince of Hebrew scholars, Prof. Franz Delitzsch, affirms that the words quoted were "an utterance of David regarding the coming Christ."

Bishop Perowne, in his "Commentary on the Psalms," says: "It seems to me, then, that we are shut up to the conclusion that in this lofty and mysterious Psalm David, speaking by the Holy Ghost, was carried beyond himself, and did see in prophetic vision that his son would also be his Lord." Dr. McLaren, of Manchester, in his recent commentary, in the "Expositor's Bible," after considering the contrary arguments of Driver and Sanday, says: "Whatever the limitations of our Lord's human knowledge, they did not affect His authority in regard to what He did teach; and the present writer ventures to believe that He did teach that David in this Psalm calls Messiah his Lord." In his last book—"Messianic Prophecies"—Prof. Franz Delitzsch declares, that he knows no counter proof which would compel him to correct the view he had previously expressed, in favor of David being its author. If such a profound and open-minded biblical scholar as Delitzsch knew of no proof, to refute the historic belief respecting the authorship of this Psalm, it must have been because no such proof exists.

It is significant that the critics who have been so much troubled over Christ's application of the 110th Psalm, and other Old Testament Scriptures, have not

directly undertaken to prove, by proper and conclusive evidence that things affirmed or assumed to be true by Him are contrary to attested facts. But, instead of doing so, they have labored to disparage the trustworthiness of His knowledge; as if their main purpose is to gain acceptance for a conception of His character, that shall leave them at liberty to promulgate views that contravene His teaching. It cannot be disproved that the acceptance of such theories about the Old Testament, and the disparagement of the testimony of Christ and His holy Apostles, tend directly to undermine and set aside the authority of the teaching of the New Testament.

NOTE.

It is sometimes alleged that there was nothing sufficiently definite in the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah to enable the people of our Lord's day to recognize Him as the Christ. This is said in a way that virtually justifies the Jews in rejecting Him. But this assertion is not true. St. John says of the things he wrote concerning Christ: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God." Simeon and Anna recognized Him as the promised "Light to lighten the Gentiles." Andrew and Philip saw evidence that they had "found Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write." Apollos "mightily convinced the Jews, showing by the Scriptures (of the Old Testament) that Jesus was the Christ." Paul's method with the people was, "persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets." So convincing was this evidence of the correspondence between the predictions of the prophets and the fulfilment by Jesus of Nazareth, that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." (Acts vi. 7.)

CHAPTER X.

EFFECT OF THE EVOLUTION THEORY ON FAITH IN THE TRUTH AND INSPIRA- TION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Statements of Higher Critics—Not Merely Literary Questions—
Theories which Affect Confidence in the Divine Authority
of Scripture—Harmful Effects on Christian Faith in
Europe—The Plea for “Christian Scholars” Examined—
Following Anti-Supernatural Leaders—Testimony of Emi-
nent Biblical Scholars on this Question.

HAVING shown that the main hypotheses, on which the theories of the higher critics respecting the dates and authors of the books of the Old Testament are based, are not supported by adequate proof, but that they are contrary to the chief facts bearing on the questions at issue, we now proceed to consider how the acceptance of these critical theories affect faith in the trustworthiness and divine inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures. This is a question of vital interest; for the beliefs of people, as to what the Bible is, exert a determining influence on their faith and life.

It is commonly alleged by the higher critics, that their analytic criticism merely relates to literary questions of dates and authorship, which do not effect

faith in the divine authority and doctrines of the Scriptures. This is the most usual way of silencing the objections of those who express doubt, respecting the tendency and influence of these critical theories. Prof. C. A. Briggs, in an article in the *Presbyterian Review*, says: "Whoever in these times, in the discussion of the literary phenomena of the "Hexateuch," appeals to the ignorance and prejudices of the multitude, as if there were any peril to the faith in these processes of the higher criticism, risks his reputation for scholarship by so doing." Prof. S. I. Curtiss, writing in the *New York Independent*, says: "If we accept the views of modern critics regarding the origin of the Old Testament as correct, so far as the evidence may seem overwhelming, we do not thereby rob the Scriptures of their divine character."

Dr. Driver says: "Criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament, it presupposes it; it seeks only to determine the conditions under which it operates and the literary forms through which it manifests itself."¹

However plausible such assertions may be, they are misleading, because such words as "divine character" and "inspiration" are used in an uncertain sense. It is beyond all question that much current criticism, by men who claim to be "Christian scholars," does *not* "presuppose" the inspiration of Scripture in the Christian sense of that term. Professor Curtiss appears to guard his assertion by requiring that the evidence

¹Page xv.

for what we accept be "overwhelming." But this does not affect the point at issue, viz., the effect of accepting this theory on belief in the divine authority of Scripture. The evidence being "overwhelming" would be a good reason for accepting the new critical conclusions; but it would not determine what their influence would be on the common Christian faith in the divine authority of the Bible. It might be the complete overthrow of that faith. The effect depends upon the character of the views, not on the amount of evidence by which they are sustained.

The late Prof. E. C. Bissell, in his essay on "The Pentateuchal Analysis and Inspiration," shows that these moderate and evangelical critics, as they are called, who assert so strongly that modern biblical criticism does not affect Christian faith in the divine authority of the Scriptures, make admissions which greatly modify these assertions.

The New York *Independent* of July 30th, 1891, in a friendly summary of the views of Professor Curtiss, as given by himself in that paper, says: "So far as historical errors or imperfect ethics and doctrine may appear in the Old Testament, he maintains that this appertains to the human side of Scripture; because God in His divine wisdom did not deem it necessary, in making a revelation, that there should be anything more than an honest attempt to transmit the facts of history; and in the character of Old Testament ethics and doctrine God has had respect to the weaknesses and limitations of men, who were not prepared for the high demands of the New Testament." President W.

R. Harper, who is regarded by many as a moderate and orthodox higher critic, says: "If there is an analysis," which he admits, "the sacred record can no longer be claimed to present a perfectly accurate account of these early times, for conflicting accounts stand side by side; changes have been arbitrarily introduced into the text; insertions and omissions have been made; the material cannot be called in a strict sense historical."²

Dr. C. A. Briggs, who so strongly contemns all who allege that the new criticism imperils faith that he assumes such an appeal could only be made to "ignorance and prejudice," and therefore not to intelligent loyalty to truth, referring to Deuteronomy, says: "This seems to imply the Mosaic authorship of a code of law; but was that code the Deuteronomic code in its present form. . . . All that is said may be true, if we suppose that an ancient Mosaic Code was discovered in Josiah's time, and that this code was put "in a popular rhetorical form as a people's law-book for practical purposes, with the authority of the king, prophet, and priest."³

It will hardly be questioned that statements like these by the same writers, in an important degree modify the confident assertion, that modern criticism does not "rob the Scriptures of their divine character," unless the words "divine character" are used in some special new sense. We freely admit that it is not for us to determine the manner in which God

² *Hebraica*, October, 1888.

³ "Hexateuch," p. 89.

would reveal His will to his intelligent creatures. This we must learn from the evidence of the Scriptures themselves. We do not test the critical conclusions to which we object by any preconceived idea of what a revelation ought to be. We do, however, affirm that divine inspiration has been claimed for alleged modes of composing and promulgating some of the sacred writings, which, judged from a Christian standpoint and conception of God's character, may be pronounced human inventions rather than divine methods. The story of the way the Book of Mormon was obtained by Joe Smith, is amply sufficient to discredit its claims to be a divine revelation, apart from the nature of its contents. Assuredly the character of the methods by which, according to the theories of the higher critics, writers and "redactors" made up several of the books of the Old Testament, so as to produce a false impression respecting their authorship and the historic facts, makes it impossible for ordinary minds to believe that any writers were ever inspired by God to do the things which the critics attribute to them, and apologize for as morally right. If the book of Deuteronomy, the Levitical laws, Joshua, Chronicles, Ezra and Daniel were produced, as the critics represent, this implies a conspiracy, extending from age to age, to mislead the readers of these writings respecting the religious history of Israel. Those who say all this was done under divine inspiration must use this term in a new sense adapted to fit the new conception of Scripture.

We maintain that much of what is called results of

“scientific” criticism, some of which have been set forth in previous chapters, must be admitted, by all unprejudiced Christian students, to be inimical to faith in the truthfulness and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. It avails nothing to say that these critical results do not contravene the doctrines of Scripture. They may not do this directly, yet in many instances they undermine and discredit the foundations on which these doctrines rest. Do not the testimony of prophets and apostles respecting the way in which revelations of truth were given to them—the belief that these revelations were written by the holy men of old to whom they have been ascribed—the trustworthiness of the religious history of the Hebrew people—the truth of the conception of Old Testament prophecy and fulfilment taught by our Lord Jesus Christ and his inspired Apostles—as well as the character of the truths taught in the Old Testament—constitute main grounds of Christian belief in the reality and truth of the divine revelations contained in these Scriptures? We cannot disturb these foundation stones without disturbing the faith that rests on them.

The acceptance of the theories of the higher criticism involves much more than literary questions. If the distinguishing results of the theorizing critics be accepted as true, this implies the acceptance of a new and different belief, respecting the nature and authority of the history and teaching of the Old Testament. If Genesis is believed to be a clumsy patchwork, compiled from contradictory accounts by

an incompetent or disingenuous redactor—if the Levitical system is believed to be the production of priests after the captivity, mainly designed to magnify their own order—if Deuteronomy, with all its holy lessons of truth and purity and important historic statements, is not what, on the face of it, it purports to be, but an artful fabrication of late date—if nearly all the books of the Old Testament are believed to be a patchwork of fragments, from unknown sources, by unknown writers and redactors, as the “Polychrome Bible” assumes—if most of the authors and redactors of the historic books were the partial and designing men which higher critics, who speak as if they knew them, represent them to have been—if the Old Testament history is incorrect and misleading and must be altered and set aside, in order to make way for a different conception of the history and religion of Israel than that given in the Hebrew Scriptures—if the account in Genesis of the Fall and the First Promise, on which St. Paul’s teaching on Depravity and Redemption is based, is believed to be an allegory or a myth—if the religious truths of the Old Testament are held to be the outcome of the religious condition of an “inspired people,” and not the cause of that condition—if prophecy is held to be something common to all the great ancient religions, as well as to that of Israel—if it is held that there is no original predictive reference to the historic Jesus Christ in Old Testament prophecy, and no actual fulfilment of prophetic predictions by the events of the life and death of the Lord Jesus, as recorded in the New Testament—

if the New Testament conception of the history and religion of Israel is believed to be erroneous and untenable—if the statements of our Lord and His apostles, respecting the actual fulfilment of Old Testament predictions of the Messiah are to be explained away, when they do not agree with the views of some modern critics, either because they were ignorant of the truth, or accepted and treated popular errors as true though knowing them to be false—if it is questioned, if not denied, that there are supernatural predictions of future events in Old Testament prophecy, whose actual fulfilment in later times is evidence of the divine inspiration of the prophecies which contained them—in a word, if these conclusions are accepted as true, as they are by leading “higher” critics and their disciples, it is quite futile for the advocates of these views to imagine that they can quiet the apprehensions and silence the objections of intelligent Christians, who believe these negative theories to be untrue and dangerous to Christian faith, by asserting that the results of modern criticism do not affect belief in the authority and inspiration of the Bible—that they “pre-suppose it.”

It is true that what men think or say about the Bible cannot indeed destroy its divine vitality. But it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion, that important grounds of belief in the infallible truth and divine authority of the teaching of the Bible, would be undermined and discredited by the acceptance of these theories. It is not too much to say, that the belief of these theories requires us to accept

a different Bible than the historic Bible of the Church, and a different Christ than the Christ of the New Testament, whom Apostles adored as the "Faithful and true Witness," the "Prince of Life," and the "Lord of Glory." The Bible we are asked to accept by the critics is a mutilated Bible, largely composed of books "cunningly-devised" to make a false impression, as to who were their authors and the time at which they were written. And the Redeemer that the critics leave us is not the infallible Christ "God manifest in the flesh," but one who shares the prejudices and erroneous beliefs of His times.

The theories of these critics suppose what the late Professor Bissell calls "the wholesale and intentional falsification of the facts of Hebrew history." In spite of the ingenious explanations and apologies with which the alleged performances of Bible writers have been defended, and the indignant denial that these can be called forgeries, the acts which the school of Wellhausen ascribes to the supposed writers of Deuteronomy, Chronicles, and other books are fraudulent and false. Professor Andrew Harper, of Australia, in a letter in the *British Weekly*, some time ago, said: "So far as I know, there is no critical problem in the Old Testament which shuts us up to the admission of any conscious deceit." We agree with this statement. But this being Professor Andrew Harper's view does not in the least degree disprove the fact that prominent leaders in modern biblical criticism teach, that some of the writers of the Old Testament substituted invented fictions for historic facts, and

deliberately ascribed their own productions to Moses. How this could be done without "conscious deceit," we must leave these critics to explain. The defence of such performances, as deeds consistent with integrity, can hardly be regarded as creditable to the apologists of these literary methods. Calling these alleged doings of priests and "redactors" by pleasant names does not change their actual character.

Dr. Driver, indeed, justifies the imaginary author of Deuteronomy in attributing his work to Moses, on the ground that this was consistent with the literary usages of his age and people. It has been well said, in reply to this assertion: "He knows and can know nothing whatever of the literary usages of the times of Josiah, except what he learns from the books themselves which he is examining, and which profess to have been written in, or to give an account of, those times. He assumes, therefore, the very point to be proved, namely, that a pious Jew in the reign of Josiah would have felt himself justified in putting into the mouth of Moses a series of discourses, not one of which, as he was well aware, Moses had ever uttered. A more unfounded assumption was never made." (Blomfield). This assumption becomes still more baseless, when we keep in mind that there is no ground to believe that Deuteronomy was written at the late date named.

It is no relevant reply to this objection respecting the hurtful effect on Christian faith, to say: "There is no cause to be alarmed about the new criticism. It can never overthrow the Bible." We are not

alarmed for the Bible. We firmly believe it will live and triumph over all assailants in the future as in the past. We believe this, not because we deem this conjectural criticism harmless; but because we believe all conclusions that are at variance with the biblical conception of the sacred writings are erroneous and untenable. If we believed these negative theories to be true, we would not have this confidence. The fact that these critical speculations do not deprive us of the truths of revelation, cannot be placed to the credit of the critics or their criticism.

The question is not whether the Bible will bear this critical scrutiny or not. It is whether those who accept theories which represent much of the Bible as fictitious, written by unknown writers who lived long after the events, who falsely ascribed their unhistoric statements to eminent prophets in order to gain credit for them, will not have their faith in the inspiration and authority of these writings undermined. False theories will not overthrow the Bible; but they will overthrow the faith of those who accept them as true. It is utterly unjustifiable to say of the promises of pardon, comfort, guidance, and strength, on which Christian faith rests, that it matters not who are their authors—whether Jesus, Isaiah, Paul, or some unknown persons who falsely ascribed them to inspired prophets or apostles. It is difficult to see any place for “promises of God” in the patchwork Bible of the critics. It is a fact, painfully illustrated in the history of individuals and communities, that the opinions cherished about what some would call the literary

history and authorship of the Bible, have prevented its teaching from exercising its transforming influence on the heart and life of those who accepted them as true.

The practical influence it has exerted on thought and life, where it has been fully tested, shows that modern radical criticism touches much more than literary questions, which do not effect Christian faith or practice. Dr. Lyman Abbott is known to be strongly in sympathy with the higher criticism. He has written a book on evolution. Every intelligent reader of this book and his other works, must have observed that the author finds it necessary to alter and transform the Christian doctrines he discusses, into something quite different from what these doctrines meant in the historic faith of the Christian church, in order to adjust them to the theory of evolution. This is a significant fact. Others must do the same.

On the continent of Europe, especially in Holland and Germany, the practical consequences of the liberal theology of the higher critics have been very notable. Professor Kuenen, of Leyden, was one of the greatest of the advanced critics. He is constantly quoted by the critics of England and America as one of the highest critical authorities on biblical questions. He was probably the most candid, logical and outspoken of the leading higher critics. The impression which his teaching made upon his countrymen is therefore of great significance; as what has happened to the Master will probably happen to his disciples.

Prof. Howard Osgood quotes the following words

of Wicksteed, the pupil, translator, and friend of Kuenen, written to explain the decline and failure of his influence in Holland: "Towards the end of the seventies the attendance in Kuenen's lecture-room began to thin, and of those students who came many were and remained orthodox. Kuenen felt the depressing influence of this change, and especially of his inability to bring home to honest students the truth of those views which, to him, rested on absolutely irrefragable evidence. The explanation, however, is not far to seek. When problems are directly connected with religious faith, most men do not and cannot take them simply on their own merits. Kuenen's orthodox students admitted that they could not refute his arguments, but they declined to accept the natural inferences from them; for there lay at the back of their minds the conviction that Kuenen was not a Christian theologian and, therefore, could not grasp the whole bearings of any question which affected the Christian faith." It seems to us, that there is more in this explanation than the writer fully apprehended. Yet some who claim to be orthodox and evangelical, quote Kuenen as an authority against the fulfilment of Old Testament predictions.

The following words of warning against current theories occur in a letter from Rev. Dr. Stalker, of Glasgow, to Rev. George Adam Smith, published in the *British Weekly* of February 18th, 1892. They are not unnecessary in Canada and the United States. "The truth is, the Dutch Church has been laid waste and sown with salt. In 1888 there were over 300 vacant

churches, about a fifth of the entire number (Zahn), and such was the neglect of ordinance that, out of an adhering population of 175,000, at most only a tenth attended worship.⁴ You say that there is no fear. Neither there is, in a sense. There is no fear of the Bible being permanently injured ; the divine life in it will assert itself and secure for it the position to which it is entitled. But it is foolish to say there is no fear for us. If we are reckless in circulating the views which have washed other churches, what right have we to presume upon immunity from the misfortunes which have befallen them ? In point of fact, it is easy to slip into the wrong attitude towards Scripture, and to dwell so constantly on what is human in it, as to lose the sense of what is divine. And such a state of mind, once established in high places, quickly spreads throughout the community."

It is surprising that at a time, when the pastors of the German Protestant churches are revolting against the rationalist speculations of the disintegrating college professors, because of their deadening influence on faith and piety, so many in England and America are eager to array themselves in the faded garments of German negative criticism, as if this were an evidence of mental superiority.

It may be replied to what has been here shown respecting the tendency and influence of the higher criticism, that "moderate critics," such as Driver, Bruce, Harper, Farrar, and others of their class, are not Rationalists, but devout men who believe in the

supernatural and hold the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures; and, therefore, what has been here said does not apply to them. I have no wish to deny these writers any credit due them for avowing faith in the supernatural, and declining to go the full length, on some points, with the more advanced German critics. But the value of these professions of faith is largely depreciated, when those who make them avow beliefs that really contradict them. Notwithstanding their admissions, they have adopted views of the origin and nature of the Sacred Writings, which are based upon the assumption that they are the products of the religious and literary development of the Hebrew people, like the ethnic religions. Their critical scheme is not in harmony with the Christian doctrine of supernatural inspiration, and does not imply or require it.

Writers who accept the main critical theory of rationalist critics, and ignore or minify the supernatural in Scripture, even though they do not avow disbelief in divine interposition in human affairs, are justly classed with Rationalists. If any teacher or author accepts the distinguishing critical conclusions of this school of writers, his personal denials of rationalist views, or avowal of orthodox beliefs, cannot cancel the significance of his critical creed. In spite of such denials and avowals, there is sometimes what a recent writer calls an "evasion of the supernatural on the part of men who profess to really believe in Christ and Christianity." "Evasion may be perpetrated through simple avoidance of the point of

supernaturalism in fact or doctrine, as the priest and the Levite passed by on the other side. Or it may be accomplished through ambiguity of expression, ostensibly affirming the supernaturalism in question ; but really not affirming it, perhaps rather suggesting an explanation that explains it away." (Dr. J. McGregor.)

It is a significant fact that Kuenen and Wellhausen, the great masters and leaders of this critical school, are really anti-supernaturalists whose critical scheme is the outcome of the negative theology. They openly reject the New Testament conception of the Old Testament, as of no authority. Kuenen held that "so long as we allow the supernatural to intervene even in a single point, so long our view of the whole continues to be incorrect." Yet these writers are quoted as critical oracles by Driver, Sanday, Bruce, Briggs, and others who are counted moderate and orthodox. Dr. Sanday, though quoting him as an authority, says: "Kuenen wrote in the interest of almost avowed naturalism, and much the same may be said of Wellhausen." Those who adopt the critical scheme which has been originated, developed, and advocated by men who do not believe in the supernatural are almost certain to sink to the same level. Men who accept the rationalist premises cannot consistently reject the logical conclusions that follow. As a recent writer remarks: "All people slipping down a precipice do not go at once to the bottom. Some catch at various outgrowths from the face of the rock, and hang there precariously till they die ;

but many will find their way quite to the bottom, whither all are heavily gravitating, and will die there—wrecks.” (Dr. E. F. Burr.)

The practical tendency of the acceptance of this modern dissective criticism of the Old Testament, is virtually to deny to the Bible those characteristics which distinguish it from all other books. It is not without significance, that unbelievers generally hail the new theories of the Old Testament, as something that gives them aid and comfort in their antagonism to revealed religion.

The so-called “evangelical scholars” who are deemed safe leaders, have all drifted away from critical views, which they have held and taught since they deemed themselves qualified to teach others. And they cannot find a resting-place short of the goal of their rationalist masters, which Cheyne has already reached. Dr. Briggs, who has recently gone over to the Episcopalians, has come out in favor of finding in the Church of Rome the hope of Christian unity. What next? Kuenen and Wellhausen boldly carry out the evolution scheme to its logical results. Driver assumes the same hypothesis, and generally adjusts his conclusions to it; but occasionally stops short of the logical result of his theory. Canon Cheyne takes him to task for this. Speaking of his “Introduction,” Cheyne says: “The book is, to a certain extent, a compromise; the (partial) compromise offered cannot satisfy those for whom it is intended; even if it were accepted, it would not be found to be safe.”⁵ Cheyne

⁵ *Expositor*, February, 1892.

holds that those who depend on Driver will be the victims of an illusion, as to the actual results of modern criticism. In other words, these results are more radical and revolutionary than Driver gives his readers to suppose. Driver, indeed, is not irreverent and dogmatic, like Kuenen and Wellhausen; but he adopts their main theory and uses their questionable methods of adjusting the Old Testament records to the demands of the theory. He sets forth doubtful opinions and arguments of others, which tend to unsettle faith in the authority of the Bible, on points on which he himself gives no certain sound. In accepting the main principles of the Graf-Wellhausen school, and yet trying to evade some of their objectionable conclusions, he takes an untenable position. He is not as outspoken or as logical as Cheyne and the more advanced critics; but he is quite as likely to unsettle the faith of those who take him as a guide in the critical study of the Old Testament. The critics who claim to be conservative and orthodox, while accepting the main premises of the rationalist leaders, are doing more to undermine faith in the truth and authority of the Scriptures than the avowed rejectors of supernatural religion.

Blomfield concedes that Dr. Driver guards himself by the statement that institutions may have existed in very early times, while the *books* that describe them may be very late. But he adds: "Yet it is impossible not to feel that without the 'Prologomena' (of Wellhausen) the 'Introduction' (of Driver) could never have been written; and that Dr. Driver is com-

mitted to a substantial agreement with Wellhausen, as to the unhistorical and untrustworthy character of a great part of the Old Testament Scriptures."⁶ Prof. Howard Osgood says of Driver's Introduction : "The highest praise that can be given to this work is that it is a serious attempt to soften and adapt Kuenen's methods and results to the foreign soil of English thought."⁷ If any one will take the trouble to make a collection of all the critical points on which Dr. Driver, either by avowal or implication, surrenders the biblical conception of revelation and favors the conclusions of the rationalist school, he will have convincing evidence of the truth of these estimates of his critical position.

If these "Christian scholars" adopt the methods and the main theories of the rationalist critics of Germany ; if they are drifting farther and farther in the direction of negative views ; if they treat the authority of Scripture lightly ; if their evolutionary hypothesis of the origin of the books of the Bible is inconsistent with its inspiration in the Christian and historic sense ; if they have accepted premises which logically lead to essentially rationalist conclusions ; and if they use the words "inspiration," "superhuman" and "divine" in a new and misleading sense, though they may be sincere in their purpose to reconcile evangelical faith with the results of the higher criticism, they cannot succeed in this task, because of the concessions they have made to negative theories. The

⁶ Page 29.

⁷ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July, 1893.

evolutionary theory of Wellhausen, Kuenen and Cornill is the scheme of critics, who have come to the study of the Bible with a disbelief in a supernatural revelation. And those who accept so much of their scheme, as is done by such followers as Robertson Smith, Driver, Briggs, Mitchell, Bruce, Harper, Cheyne, and G. C. Workman, have no solid standing ground for a belief in the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, in the proper Christian sense of the term.⁸

Whatever may be true in the case of those who have been brought up in the evangelical faith, and afterward give their assent to the new theories about the Bible, those who begin their religious life with these low views of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, are not likely to be distinguished by strong faith in the saving truths of the Gospel. We cannot minify and ignore God's interposition in the affairs of His people in the past, without weakening the ground of confidence in Him as the Answerer of prayer in the present. Are young ministers whose minds are filled with these unsettling speculations, about fanciful "sources" and dissections of the books of the Bible, likely to be made thereby "mighty in

⁸ The late Professor Kuenen's position is thus stated by Wicksteed, his disciple and biographer: "It was an attempt of singular boldness and vigor to shake the tradition of Christian piety free from every trace of supernaturalism and implied exclusiveness. It involved the absolute surrender of the orthodox dogmatics, of the authority of the Scriptures, of the divine character of the Church as an external institution; and, of course, it bases the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to our affection and gratitude solely upon what history can show that he, as a man, had been and done for men.—*Jewish Quarterly Review*, July 1892.

the Scriptures," and more successful in bringing sinners into the experience of personal salvation? Are the preachers among the higher critics men who magnify the grace of Christ and exercise a soul-saving ministry? Do they clearly hold and teach the doctrines of the Atonement, Regeneration, Forgiveness, and the Efficacy of Prayer, as held in the evangelical Christian churches? It is hard to see how affirmative answers can be given to these questions. It may be admitted that men who have been savingly converted, and have received a sound religious training, may retain their religious faith after accepting rationalist ideas on some points. But if such men retain their faith, notwithstanding their acceptance of lax views of the inspiration of Scripture, it would be unjustifiable to claim the credit of this for the higher criticism. It is really the result of their earlier orthodox training.

If a "Christian scholar" who, according to Dr. Driver, "pre-supposes" the inspiration of the Bible, accepts and defends the belief that the Old Testament has been to a great extent made what it is, by untrustworthy historians, incompetent or disingenuous "redactors," and partisan priests, what value is there in the assertion of such a scholar, that all this is consistent with a belief in the doctrine of Inspiration? Is the admission of Inspiration, in some vague sense in harmony with their critical theories, to make all the crooked things straight, and cancel the effect of their concessions to the rationalist theory of the evolution of the Scriptures?

It would be easy to give examples of the flippant way in which the higher criticism leads its votaries, who are regarded as moderate and safe, to treat the Holy Scriptures. Dr. Horton says: "The word of the Lord comes to men to-day just as it came to the prophets of Israel." He also speaks of "the most striking of the mistakes into which the Apostle (St. Paul), owing to the limitations of the most inspired teachers, fell." Professor Bennett, somewhat patronizingly, says: "No doubt much that is most characteristic and valuable in Christian thought is found in germ and suggestion in the Jewish Scriptures."

Professor Duff, of Bradford, England, maintains that we learn the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, not from what He is recorded to have said in the first century, but from the thoughtful mind of Christians of this 19th century. Appeals to the Bible must be out of date with those who hold this view.

The Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost quoted from the 16th Psalm the words, "neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," and speaking of David, said: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: *he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption.*" (Acts ii. 30, 31.) But the Rev. G. C. Workman says: "In this Psalm there is no reference whatever to the resurrection." "To suppose that Peter is here interpreting the passage from the Psalm, as though it

contained an idea of the resurrection of the Messiah, is to overlook entirely the principle of apostolic application or accommodation." That is, the Apostle's statement does not agree with Dr. Workman's negative theory, that there is no New Testament fulfilment of prophecy by events that had been foretold coming to pass, and therefore the explicit declaration of the Apostle must be set aside as of no authority whatever. Are the critical theories that result in this way of treating the Holy Scriptures worthy of Christian confidence?

One has no difficulty in understanding the position of those who openly regard the Old Testament simply as ancient national literature, and deny that it has any special divine authority. But it is certainly not so easy to understand the position of men who are regarded as learned and pious writers, whose teaching divests the Bible of its divine characteristics and regards the Book as being just what the rationalist critics assume it to be, and yet maintain that this lowering of its character does not affect faith in its inspiration and authority.

To show that this estimate of the tendency and effect of accepting the negative conclusions of the higher criticism, is not merely my personal opinion, I shall close this chapter with a few quotations from distinguished biblical scholars, who strongly maintain that the questions raised by modern criticism are not mere literary questions, which do not affect belief in the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures.

Prof. James Robertson, after asking the important

question, Whether the relation of the Old Testament to the New would be the same, or whether Christianity as a historically developed religion would have the same value for us, if the historic facts of the Old Testament were regarded as the higher critics regard them? pertinently says: "It is altogether inadequate to reply to such a question (as Driver does), that 'criticism in the hands of Christian scholars does not banish or destroy the inspiration of the Old Testament; it *presupposes* it.' Such scholars would do an invaluable service to the Church at the present time, if they would explain what they meant by inspiration in this connection, and define wherein their position differs from that of critics who profess no such reverence for the Old Testament."⁹

The Rev. F. E. Spencer, in his essay in "Lex Mosaiica" quotes Dr. Driver's remark in a sermon, that "the moral and devotional value of the Old Testament—as indeed its religious value generally—is unaffected by critical questions respecting the authorship or date of its various parts." After stating how the source and support of its ideas are changed, he says: "'Critical questions of authorship and date, may or may not affect the value of a series of writings. It entirely depends upon the kind of critical questions mooted. But to say that the critical questions now in debate amongst us do not affect the religious value of the writings called sacred by us, seems to stultify the understanding.'"

Bishop Ellicott says: "An inspiration that can be

⁹ "Early Religion," p. xi.

compatible with continually attributing to God utterances and enactments alleged to have been made to Moses, when they were due only to an interested writer, who was making use of the great Lawgiver's name, is an inspiration that is outside all reasonable and reverent consideration."

Principal Cave, who is as familiar with the German and British literature of modern biblical criticism as any theologian in England, says: "The recent attacks of the 'higher criticism' upon the Old Testament do not concern simply some relatively unimportant bastion or trench; they are directed against the innermost fortress, where floats the standard of Protestantism, the first article of which justly is, 'The Divine Inspiration, Authority and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures.'"¹⁰

Professor Robertson also says: "At the same time I am as firmly convinced that in critical discussions on the Old Testament, as these have been conducted, there is much more involved than the dates of books and the literary modes of their composition. Whatever may be said of the 'traditional view' on these subjects, it is to be remembered that the 'traditional view' of the history of the religion is the view of the biblical writers; and if it is declared to be incorrect, our estimate of the value of the books must be considerably modified."¹¹

Prof. G. H. Schodde, in an article in the *Treasury Magazine*, says: "The danger and harm of the

¹⁰ "Battle of the Standpoints," p. 5.

¹¹ Page vi.

Pentateuchal analysis does not lie in it as a merely literary problem. And, indeed, this is not the heart and soul of the problem at all; this is but the preliminary phase, the means to the end. This end is the reconstruction of Israel's religious development."

Still more pointedly the late Professor Dwinell, in his essay on "The Higher Criticism and a Spent Bible," speaking of this class of critics, says; "The only inspiration possible under this theory is of a very equivocal order, morally and spiritually; for it is an inspiration that does not keep the sacred writers from making up a pretended framework of history, in which to set their characters and instructions. It does not interfere with their asserting things to be facts which never took place. It does not stand in the way of consciously antedating and representing things as having occurred centuries before which really occurred later, or of deliberately writing after the events had taken place, and giving the writing the form of prediction and passing it off as prophecy. It does not stay the sacred authors from writing out their own intuitions or experience, or thoughts and reasonings, and claiming that these teachings came directly from God. A kind of inspiration which admits of all these duplicities and falsities must be accepted as true, if this criticism is admitted. Surely inspiration drops down to a low and ignominious plane on this theory.!"

Professor Whitehouse of Cheshunt College says: "The results as presented by Wellhausen in the sketch of the "History of Israel," contributed to the "Encyclo-

pedia Britannica," are obviously subversive of Biblical authority; and when we turn to the history recently published by Stade, a disciple of the same school, we find the early history of the Old Testament reduced to a heap of ruins."¹²

The late Prof. E. C. Bissell, in his essay on "The Pentateuchal Analysis and Inspiration," from which we have already quoted, says: "The only ground for surprise is that with the really tremendous change of attitude toward the Bible, necessitated by this treatment of it, Christian scholars who are fully aware of this change should speak of it as 'harmless,' as theologically 'natural' in its effects; should say that any one who thinks there is peril to the faith in these processes of the higher criticism 'risks his reputation for scholarship' thereby, and is still able to use unmodified, the old formula that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' Undoubtedly those expressions are quite sincerely made. Our sole contention is that the words 'Scripture' and 'inspiration,' as thus used, have never as yet been naturalized among us."

The venerable Prof. W. H. Green, the Nestor of Hebrew scholars in America, makes these weighty and forcible remarks on this subject: "It does not annul the inherently vicious character or the evil tendencies of this hypothesis, that men revered for their learning and piety have, of late, signified their acceptance of it, and that they consider its adoption compatible with whatever is essential to the Christian

¹² *Expositor*, February, 1888.

faith. It is a remarkable phenomenon, that in European universities eminent biblical scholarship has been to so great an extent dissociated from faith in the Scriptures in any evangelical sense. We may wisely employ the Philistines to sharpen our spears and our swords ; but we cannot join them in an assault upon the camp of Israel. No more perilous enterprise was ever attempted by men held in honor in the Church than the wholesale commendation of the results of unbelieving criticism, in application both to the Pentateuch and to the rest of the Bible, as though they were the incontestable product of the highest scholarship. They who have been themselves thoroughly grounded in the Christian faith may, by a happy inconsistency, hold fast their old convictions while admitting principles, methods, and conclusions which are logically at war with them. But who can be surprised if others shall, with stricter logic, carry what has thus been commended to them to its legitimate issue ? ”¹³

No matter with what acute learning or plausible arguments the development theory of the Old Testament may be advocated, the trend of the movement is unmistakably in the direction of a denial of the supernatural. The conflict is becoming more and more a battle of naturalism against belief in the direct interposition of a personal God in Hebrew history, or in any human history. On this point Bishop Ellicott pertinently observes : “ Not merely that this modern view tends to, or prepares the way for, a denial of the

¹³ *Old Testament Student*, July, 1887.

supernatural, but that it owed its very origin to the assumption, that the existence of the supernatural in these early records is exactly that which wrecks their credibility."¹⁴

The following weighty words, from the same eminent author, are profoundly suggestive. After expressing surprise at the position of some respected writers in his own church, Bishop Ellicott says: "If the supernatural is to be minimised in the Old Testament, will it be long before the same demand will be made in reference to the New? To safeguard the miraculous in the New dispensation, when criticism has either explained it away or attenuated it in the Old dispensation, will in practice be found to be utterly hopeless. . . . The same spirit, that has found irreconcilable difficulties in the supernatural element of the Old Testament, will ultimately challenge the evidence on which the Incarnation rests. The doctrine of the Word become flesh, the doctrine which is the hope, light, and life of the universe will, in the end be surrendered; the total eclipse of faith will have commenced, and the shadows of the great darkness will be fast sweeping over the forlorn and desolate soul."¹⁵

¹⁴ "Christus Comprobator," p. 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

Re-statement of Facts and Arguments in Previous Chapters
—Many Critical Conclusions Unreasonable—Advantages
of the Analytic Criticism Unduly Magnified—Prof. W. J.
Beecher on the “Books” and the “Sources”—No Moral
Power Gained by Dissecting the Books.

The subject we have been considering in the preceding pages covers such a wide range of topics that many minor points have been left unnoticed. Yet we think all unbiased readers will admit that the foregoing chapters furnish conclusive evidence, that there are weighty objections to the chief theories of the modern divisive school of biblical criticism. The facts we have stated are neither irrelevant nor unimportant.

Nothing has been said by us in denial of the right, or value of the most thorough critical examination of everything that can promote a fuller knowledge of the books of the Bible, or against the acceptance of all facts about the Bible, that are attested by proper evidence. But it has been shown that there is a widespread tendency to substitute indefinite language about freedom of thought and modern biblical criticism, for a definite statement and proper proof of the

views implied, and that are intended to be covered by these general expressions.

The most characteristic theories of the evolutionary higher critics, which imply a new conception of the Bible, have been briefly but fairly stated. It has been shown that, contrary to a widespread notion, many eminent Hebrew scholars, who have vindicated and exercised the right of free biblical criticism, have gone over all the questions of the higher criticism, and yet have seen good reason to reject the main conclusions of the leading lights of this analytical school.

I may fairly claim that it has been shown beyond reasonable question, that recent archæological discoveries contradict the assumption of the crude literary and religious state of the people of Israel, at the times of Moses and David, on the strength of which late dates have been assigned to a large part of the Old Testament.

No impartial reader will deny that the numerous references to the Pentateuchal laws and records, in the early writing prophets and historic books, conclusively disprove the idea that the silence of Scripture, and the recorded neglect of the Mosaic laws, show that the Pentateuch was not known nor in existence during the chief historic period of Israel's national life.

It will hardly be denied that what has been shown, respecting the questionable methods and contradictory differences of leading higher critics, gives good reason to distrust writers whose methods of proof are so utterly unscientific.

In reply to the plea that higher criticism only deals with literary matters of style, and form, and time, which do not affect faith in the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, it has been shown that the higher criticism, by regarding the Bible as an evolution, and by its assumptions respecting the origin and authorship of several of the books, requires a new conception of the Scriptures, which implies a denial of characteristics that are main grounds on which we believe their teaching to be invested with divine authority. Nor can it be denied, that even those who profess to believe in the supernatural, when they accept the premises of the Rationalists, must also accept their negative conclusions.

The relation of these critical theories, about the Old Testament, to the infallible authority and divine character of the Lord Jesus Christ is a matter the most serious in its consequences. If the conception of the Old Testament set forth in the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles be thrust aside as erroneous, to make way for the modern development theory, it is impossible to see how the divine authority of the New Testament can be consistently maintained.

It has been intimated in a previous chapter that, in the opinion of many competent judges, the way in which the higher critics try to solve Old Testament difficulties creates greater difficulties than those they remove, and requires the acceptance of more unreasonable beliefs than those they reject. Have not the facts, brought out in the previous chapters, fully justi-

fied this opinion? Let us glance at a few of these demands on our credulity, which are implied in the acceptance of current critical theories about the Old Testament.

Though, as Dr. Sayce has remarked, in the case of two authors, like Rice and Besant, who jointly write one literary work in our mother tongue, it is impossible to tell what each contributed, yet we are asked to believe that modern critics, nearly three thousand years after the writing of works in an ancient language, with a very limited literature, can discover in a book that has been regarded through the ages as the work of one author, evidence of its composite character; and point out with confidence the parts contributed by the supposed authors and redactors, even to assigning parts of the same verse to different writers of different periods. Does the traditional view make as great a demand on our credulity? If redactors and later writers altered and added to the documents at will, how can our copies of the Scriptures be in a condition that would justify modern critics in being so confident as to what were the original sources?

The late dates, assigned by these critics to a large portion of the Old Testament, assumes that the period of Israel's greatest national prominence was a barren period, that left comparatively no literary or religious record; and that the period of national decline and enslavement, while their temple and city lay in ruins, was the time of literary and religious fruitfulness.

Moses, David and Isaiah have been enthroned in history and in the thoughts of men, mainly on the

ground of their being the authors of certain sacred writings; but we are asked by the higher critics to believe, without a particle of historic evidence, that these prophets were not the authors of the writings to which they owe their undying renown. In other words, such a Moses and such a David and Isaiah as the Old Testament assumes and the Church has believed in, in all ages, must be denied an historic existence, because the theory of Wellhausen and his followers requires the rejection of the historic belief respecting the religion and history of Israel.

The critics who assign Deuteronomy and the Levitical laws to late dates and unknown authors, expect us to believe that, though these anonymous authors ascribed their work to Moses, to obtain a respect and authority for their writings which they would not otherwise have gained, yet Moses was not the author of the laws nor the doer of the deeds, which had invested him with the renown that made them desire the prestige of his name for their work.

If we accept Canon Cheyne's theory of the Psalms being all of late dates, we must believe that, although David is enshrined in history and tradition as a poet and psalmist, he has left us no poems or psalms. Or, as one has expressed it, "that the poems David wrote are lost, and that poems not his and not like his, differing essentially from his in character and spiritual grasp, have been universally and from very early times ascribed to him."

The critics who teach that the Levitical system was concocted and organized at or after the time of the

Babylonian Exile, ask us to believe that, after the great prophets had preached a spiritual religion of truth and righteousness, and according to the higher criticism condemned all sacrifices, such godly leaders as Ezekiel and Ezra and their associates invented and finally established, as laws given by God to Moses, an elaborate system of ritual and sacrifices. Well may Professor Streibert say: "That this work should be foisted upon the people by Ezra and Nehemiah is simply incredible."

Not less preposterous is the notion of the higher critics that Deuteronomy was written by Hilkiyah or some unknown author, not long before Josiah's time—that it was found in the temple and accepted by King Josiah and all the people as the genuine work of Moses; and that a great reformation was carried out on the strength of the belief that its laws were given by God to Moses, as recorded in the book itself; and yet that this pious fraud was never found out by the Hebrew people or any one, till it was unearthed by the higher critics of the Nineteenth Century.

Those who call portions of Genesis "Babylonian ideas," ask us to believe that though the literature and religion of Israel are most ancient, and have been beyond all question one of the most vital and influential moral forces known to mankind, yet that the Hebrew people were behind others in religious intelligence, and were forced to borrow their ideas about the early history of mankind from their polytheistic heathen neighbors.

Even if we leave out of sight the cogent critical

arguments, which have been urged against the chief hypotheses of the most popular school of higher critics, it is not too much to say, that the unreasonable and improbable character of many of the conclusions they assume, constitutes a strong reason against accepting theories and methods that are weighted with such objectionable consequences, and require such ready credulity on the part of those who accept them.

A great deal is said in current biblical literature about the benefits conferred on the world by the results of modern criticism of the Old Testament. It is sometimes said that it has made the Bible a new book, to those who have accepted the critical theories, by investing its teaching with greater practical interest, and showing that its admonitions and precepts were given to meet the wants of living men of other times. It may be freely admitted that the concentration of thought on the Old Testament, in recent times, has given to many an enlarged view of the wealth and preciousness of its teachings, apart from all critical theories.

We have no disposition to deny whatever truth there may be in these claims of the critics. Yet there is good reason to believe that the advantages to the interests of religion, which have been claimed for the new criticism, have been very much exaggerated. The good results have been more indirect than direct. Anything that causes more general and close study of the Word of God must prove an advantage. But the advantages are largely counterbalanced by the

unsettling tendency of the critical speculations of the advanced critics.

The main advantages that may be claimed for the modern critical study of the Bible are these:

1. The thorough sifting of the character and claims of the Scriptures will, we firmly believe, result in their fuller vindication, and this will give a firmer basis to faith in their divine character and authority. When the Bible emerges out of the keen critical controversies of our times, like gold tried in the fire, this will give a strong ground for confidence that no future assaults on its truth and integrity will be more successful than those of the past.

2. A still more direct and practical result of modern study of the Bible is, that a fuller knowledge of the occasions of the prophecies and other parts of the Scriptures gives a deeper human interest to lessons of truth, spoken to "men subject to like passions as we are." This, however, is no modern discovery, and it should not be so stated as to ignore or obscure the great truth declared by St. Paul, that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. xv. 4) There can be no question that it adds greatly to the interest of any prophetic message to know the occasion of its deliverance, and the condition of those to whom it was addressed. We read the book of Ezekiel with greater interest, when we bear in mind that his message was delivered to the captives in Babylon. The admonitions and threatenings of Malachi are invested with

greater force, when we note their pointed adaptation to the moral condition of the people in the time of the restoration under Nehemiah. The epistle to the Philippians acquires a deeper significance when it is read in the light of the circumstances under which Paul and Silas founded that church.

But there is a serious drawback to the advantage of this interest arising from the times and occasions of the writings. As I have said in another place, "just because the occasion of a prophecy or Psalm enhances its interest, many writers have invented imaginary settings for portions of the Old Testament, which have no historic foundation," but are mere conjectures made to help out some fancy hypothesis. There is certainly not much gain in accepting Canon Cheyne's denial that David wrote the 23rd Psalm, or in his gratuitous ascription of the 110th psalm to Simon Maccabeus, and many similar conjectures that are equally baseless.

3. The Old Testament might be made a "new book," without being made a *better book* that would be a gain to the Christian faith. If it were made "a new book," by divesting it of characteristic qualities that vindicate its claim to be received with confidence, as a book containing a true history of Israel and divine revelations of religious truth, such a change would certainly make it a different book. This, however, would be loss and not gain.

The preposterous claim that the negative view, which denies that the Old Testament prophecies contain predictions that foretell the historic Jesus

Christ, gives greater emphasis to the ethical and religious teaching of prophecy than the orthodox view, has no foundation in fact. The really valuable biblical criticism is that which gives the best rendering, and the truest exposition of the meaning of the Holy Scriptures. But this work has been much more largely accomplished by evangelical scholars than by the dissecting theorizers. It is not true that the "higher critics" have given greater prominence to the religious teaching of the Old Testament than orthodox expositors. These critics in their work give few signs of being impressed by the spiritual and divine elements in prophecy. Speaking of Kuenen and Wellhausen, an English divine says: "It has apparently escaped them both that there is anything high in idea, noble in motive, regenerating in social influence, in the literature which they have set themselves to dissect." (Rev. F. E. Spencer.)

Everything that brings out the meaning of the Scriptures should be prized and commended; *but we have seen that the chief work of the evolutionary critics consists in dissecting the books, that have been regarded as connected records written by certain Hebrew prophets, and ascribing fragments of them to different imaginary authors, of whom no one has ever heard; but who are assumed to have written at a late period that renders their statements of doubtful historic value.*

It has been shown that many eminent professors of the Old Testament language and literature, who stand

in the front rank of Oriental scholars, repudiate most of the conclusions of the dissecting critics, who build so largely on what they call internal evidence.

The advantage of the dissection is by no means clear. As a recent writer has said, "It is altogether unreasonable to suppose that the mere pulling of the Old Testament Scriptures to pieces, and putting them together again, must of necessity add a vast deal to our comprehension of their contents." (Lias.) Supposing, for argument sake, that all these conjectural theories about authors and redactors were facts, what great benefit could this bestow? It would be a matter of literary interest, no doubt. But, leaving out of sight the fact that these critical guesses merely give "a local habitation and a name" to such "airy" beings as E, ²E, J, ²J, J E, D, P, ¹R, ²R, ³R, and all the rest of the redactors which the rationalist theories require, it is by no means clear how this assignment of fragmentary "sources" adds any elements of spiritual or moral power to the Sacred Writings, or how it would tend to make them exert a mightier religious influence in the future than they have done in the past. We have seen that its tendency is to have a very contrary effect.

A very suggestive article on this phase of the subject, by Prof. Willis J. Beecher, of Auburn Theological Seminary, appeared in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for last April. After stating the attitude of the two schools of biblical scholars towards the Old Testament, Professor Beecher shows that the conservative scholars

deal chiefly with the BOOKS of the Old Testament themselves, as we find them in the Bible. The higher critics deal mainly with the supposed "sources" on which these books are based. He thinks both books and "sources" should be studied. But he deems the books themselves much more important than the alleged "sources." Professor Beecher maintains that the study of the "sources" is for the sake of the books, and that the books present a large field for study, in addition to all possible study of the "sources."

As he shows, it was the Old Testament, as we have it, that was "the law and the testimony" of the Jewish Church. These books were the "Scriptures" to which Christ and His Apostles appealed as possessing divine authority. It was the Old Testament, as we have it, that has been revered and cherished by the Christian Church through the centuries. It was these books, without regard to the "sources," that have been the great moral and spiritual power that transformed individuals and communities. It is these books, alleged by the critics to be a patchwork of discordant fragments by unknown scribes, whose literary beauty and sublimity have called forth the admiring eulogies of the greatest thinkers and writers of the ages.

Even if we leave out of sight altogether the very questionable kind of evidence, by which the dissections and conjectural sources are supported, there is not a shadow of reason to believe that the "Polychrome Bible," with all its rainbow hues, will give men truer conceptions of God's will, be more potent

to quicken the conscience, bring richer messages of peace and pardon to the sorrowing and sinful, or be a mightier life-giving power to the children of men, than the undissected old Bible, whose words of life, from age to age, have been the power of God, making multitudes "wise unto salvation."

NOTE.

In the foregoing chapters we have not advocated any specific theory of Inspiration. It is the authenticity and trustworthiness of the Sacred Writings, rather than any theory of Inspiration, that are assailed by Rationalist criticism. We know nothing of the manner in which religious truths and future events were revealed to the prophets, except from what they tell us themselves. The manner of their inspiration is quite secondary to the fact. The main questions are: Did God make special revelations to prophets and apostles, beyond what human reason could discover, and distinctly different from the manifestation of the Spirit given to pious souls in all ages? Was the development of religious knowledge in Old Testament times the result of fuller revelations of His will made to prophets and inspired messengers, and not an evolution, resulting from the moral and literary advancement of the Hebrew people? All who are true to the teaching of the Bible must answer these questions with a decided affirmative.

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